

# BREAKTHROUGH

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*Special International Issue*

Central America  
Symposium

German Reunification

Soviet New Left

Women in  
the Intifada

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**Cover:** Poster by Doug Minkler for The Captive Minds Series, workshops examining the disintegration of western culture and exploring the development of a culture of liberation, Fall 1985. Quoted on the original poster were the words: "In our country people are rarely imprisoned for their ideas...because we're already imprisoned by our ideas" — Frank Garvey.

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# AIDS Action Equals Life

**T**HE AIDS MOVEMENT HAS ACHIEVED SOME AMAZING SUCCESSES IN ITS SHORT life. It has challenged the arrogance of the medical establishment, insisting that people with AIDS and HIV infection have an equal voice in determining how the epidemic is fought. Activists have forced the FDA to speed up its drug-approval process, and are now targeting the NIH, demanding that it stop wasting its resources on testing the oh-so-profitable AZT and begin testing the dozens of other potentially promising treatments for HIV and AIDS-related infections. The AIDS movement has fought housing, job, and health insurance discrimination. As a direct result, people with HIV were included among those protected by the recently-signed Americans with Disabilities Act. AIDS activism has galvanized an international movement of protest against the U.S. policy of excluding HIV-infected immigrants and foreign visitors — discussion is now going on in Congress about overturning the policy. And the AIDS movement has done all this while maintaining an uncompromising sex-positive, pro-gay stance (Jesse Helms, eat your heart out).

When the Sixth International Conference on AIDS came to San Francisco at the end of June (a slight tactical faux pas on the part of conference organizers — it was Lesbian/Gay Freedom Week), ACT UP and ACT NOW (the national coalition of AIDS activist organizations) mobilized well over a thousand people from all across the United States to participate in six days of relentless protest. They marched on the INS. They jumped the police barricades that enforced their exclusion from the conference. They blocked traffic on Market Street. They stormed the office of the insurance commissioner. Over 350 people were arrested. And, in a stunning climax to the week, 500 activists snuck into the conference with fake badges, where they totally drowned out the closing address by Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan.

But there was something missing from these demonstrations. One of the most popular chants of the week was, "300,000 dead from AIDS. Where is George?" But it could just as easily have been, "Where is the rest of the progressive movement?"

The AIDS epidemic is ten years old. In those ten years, 87,000 people have died in the U.S. alone. The World Health Organization now estimates that 350,000 people have died worldwide. Reports that AIDS has "peaked," that the AIDS crisis is passing, are a myth. AIDS is one of the most serious plagues that humanity has ever faced. And it is getting worse, not better.

In affected communities, every day brings news of another friend, a lover, a husband or wife, a child dying. Life is filled with medical horror stories and bureaucratic nightmares. In the U.S., money allocated for AIDS research and treatment is squandered on drugs that will maximize profits for pharmaceutical companies. In Central Africa, there is no money to treat people with AIDS. An entire generation is threatened.

But AIDS is also a political epidemic. It has exacerbated every contradiction inherent in capitalist society: racism, misogyny, homophobia, poverty, and violence. It took Ronald Reagan eight years to say the word "AIDS" in public. George Bush isn't doing much better. Lighting candles doesn't cut it.

What does all this mean? People who consider themselves progressive, whatever their priorities, have to make AIDS an active concern. There's no such thing as benign neglect. When ACT UP demonstrated during the AIDS conference, we all belonged in the streets with them: Central America activists, environmentalists, socialists, Marxist-Leninists — anyone in the peace and justice community. Not enough were.

AIDS isn't "someone else's issue." And the AIDS movement isn't just a "hot" new constituency to be leafleted and organized. Enough is enough. The fight against AIDS is a fundamental battle for human rights. It demands the full support and participation of the entire progressive movement.

Act up, fight back, fight AIDS!



# This Land Is Their Land

THE IMAGE IS EERILY REMINISCENT OF ONES WE'VE SEEN SO MANY times before. Native warriors defending their land with arms, while federal troopers lay siege, prevent food and medicines from getting in, determined once again to show who counts in North America. This time in typical colonialist fashion, the townspeople are insisting on enlarging their golf course (yes, golf course) on Mohawk burial grounds in Oka, Quebec (so much for sovereignty, Quebec). But the picture could be of Wounded Knee, Alcatraz or Akwasasne. It could be anywhere in the Americas, where native indigenous people are still fighting for their land, their culture and their people.

How fitting that when Nelson Mandela came to Oakland he talked about Indian reservations and the rich heritage of Indian peoples, comparing the policies of the South African regime with that of the U.S. government. For *every day*, somewhere on this continent, genocide continues against indigenous peoples.

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Since 1973, when Congress opened traditional Indian lands around Big Mountain, Arizona, to mineral exploitation, a struggle to stop the relocation of Hopi and Navajo communities has been taking place. The area is the home of the sovereign Diné Nation (Navajo), the largest concentration of Native Americans in North America to maintain a very traditional way of life. Since the 1930s, when a U.S. Geological Survey showed the region to contain the largest coal and uranium deposits in the U.S., and huge underground oil fields, the government and mining companies have maneuvered to first exploit and then remove the Indian people who stood in their way. Navajos were hired to work the uranium mines without being warned of the dangers. Large numbers of severe birth defects in Navajo children resulted.

The U.S. government and Peabody Coal, a multi-national mineral conglomerate, then fomented a range war between the Hopi and Navajo people — who had lived together in peace for 600 years. Using these divisions, the government began moving in 1973 to force their eviction from the mineral-rich area. Despite a strong and sustained resistance, today fewer than 300 families remain in the Big Mountain encampment. Intolerable economic and political pressures have driven most of the younger Indians out of the area, forcing them into conditions of urban poverty. Having strip-mined miles of land already, Peabody now is threatening the communities of Cactus Valley and Mosquito Springs with forced eviction.

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Chippewa Indians in northern Wisconsin, exercising their rights to spear-fishing off of their reservation, have faced mobs of white protesters for years. The whites, who cynically claim to be protecting a "natural resource," in their more candid moments admit that they want to "end Indian special rights." For the last few years, Indian spear-fishers have braved barrages of rocks, full beer cans and bullets. Their fishing boats have been swamped; they have been shot with ball bearings and taunted with racist chants. Caps worn by the whites feature slogans like "Too Bad Custer Ran Out of Bullets" and "I Am Revolting Against Certain Indian Special Treatment" (i.e., RACIST).

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The insensitivity of white settler society towards Indian people is perhaps most clear in Oka, Quebec where developers want to bulldoze a Native burial site to expand a nine-hole golf course. Ironically, the



Quebecois who take great pride in their cultural uniqueness and are demanding Quebec sovereignty, seem to have nothing but contempt for the land's original inhabitants. In this case, the hypocritical attitudes of whites towards traditional people is particularly blatant. While the desecration of Jewish graves in France draws deserved international condemnation, everybody wonders what the big deal is about putting a golf course over Indian graves.

Since early July, the Kanesatake Mohawk Nation has been under siege at Oka by para-military forces of the Quebec police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Policy (RCMP). Their "crime" was a strong and armed resistance to defend their sacred lands from desecration. Police have cut off food and medical supplies and as we went to press, there was fear that the RCMP were planning an armed attack on Kanesatake and were prepared to accept heavy casualties from both Native and non-Native people, as well as their own personnel.

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The imprisonment of Leonard Peltier goes on and on. Perhaps the most famous political prisoner in the world since Nelson Mandela's release, Peltier is a 44-year old Chippewa Sioux activist in the American Indian Movement. Targeted by the FBI for his leadership in the struggle on South Dakota's Pine Ridge reservation, Leonard was charged with the killing of two FBI agents during a shoot-out in 1975. In 1977 he was convicted on the basis of inconclusive and incomplete evidence which the FBI knowingly submitted in order "to establish Peltier's guilt." Although federal prosecutors have admitted there no longer exists a case against him, the Federal Appeals Court and the Supreme Court have denied his appeals, acknowledging that exposure of FBI misconduct at this time would further tarnish the image of the agency.

Having exhausted all legal venues, an international campaign is seeking a Presidential pardon for Leonard. A petition campaign in the U.S. has been underway to gather a million signatures and is being presented by Congressional leaders to Bush at this time. Seventeen million Soviet citizens and hundreds of thousands of European and Japanese citizens, the European Parliament, Bishop Desmond Tutu and dignitaries from around the world have demanded Leonard's release.

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At the heart of these struggles is Native land and sovereignty. And the conditions facing Native people in urban areas — healthcare, education, substance abuse, police brutality and homelessness — can be directly traced to their forcible eviction from their land. Native people's traditions and lives are too easily forgotten, even by progressive people. For

instance, how can we struggle for a new approach to the environment without listening to and learning from the original caretakers of the land? Or how can we talk about reproductive rights without talking about the sterilization of Indian women?

Genocide against Native Americans is not just a sordid episode from this continent's past. As we approach the 500th anniversary of the Spanish conquest, Native people's territory and resources are still being ripped off. 1992 is not just a cultural phenomenon, a celebration of an historical milestone. It raises in the deepest way the entire basis of American societies. As long as entrenched racism and attacks against Native people's traditions, sovereignty and land continue, any question of human rights or social justice in this hemisphere will be a farce. □



Mohawk warriors at Kanesatake encampment, Quebec

*You may contact the following organizations for more information or to give your support: International Indian Treaty Council, 701 Clayton St., San Francisco, CA 94117, (415)566-0251; Big Mountain Support, 3663-20th St., San Francisco, CA 94110, (415)648-8472; Midwest Treaty Network, 731 State St., Madison, WI 53703 or Wa-Swa-Gon Treaty Association, Box 217, Lac du Flambeau, WI 54538. (re: Chippewa fishing struggle); Kanesatake Mohawk Nation, (514)479-8353 or (514)479-6378 (FAX); Defense Fund for Mohawk Sovereignty, c/o Bread & Roses Credit Union, 348 Danforth Ave., Suite 211, Toronto, Ontario M4K 1N8, (416)461-7882 (for financial contributions).*



# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

**F**or more than a decade, Central America solidarity work has connected activists here with a dynamic process of revolution. Boldly challenging U.S. domination, the people of El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala envisioned new and just societies, and began to construct them. People in this country responded — with action, material support and deeply-felt bonds of solidarity and friendship. Hundreds of thousands of us have demonstrated — and tens of thousands of us have been arrested — in protests against U.S. policy.

Now those ties are being put to the test. The February elections in Nicaragua, the successful U.S. invasion of Panama, the seeming “stalemate” in El Salvador, the media’s silence on Central America — all have taken a toll. Most core activists remain hard at work, but others are drifting away — not yet in droves, but in a significant trickle. Some think the war is winding down, and that other issues loom as more important. Others question both what gains can be made in Central America right now, as well as the impact the movement here can have in changing U.S. policy.

We believe that Central America solidarity should

remain a high priority. The war hasn’t ended — it’s entered a new and complex phase. Current U.S. strategy is a classic application of low intensity conflict. By adopting a lower profile and accepting negotiations, the Bush Administration has taken the war off the front pages. Now it’s trying to pressure insurgent forces in El Salvador and Guatemala into unfavorable settlements, while dismantling the gains of the Nicaraguan revolution, and tightening the screws on Cuba.

Bush may preach negotiations — but he’s using economic and military power to impose U.S. terms. It’s up to the anti-intervention movement to expose this strategy and generate a new stage of resistance to it.

With social unrest growing in Latin America — and with “drug wars” looming in the Andes — the Bush Administration would like to stabilize Central America without changing the status quo. This won’t be possible. As painful as the Sandinista defeat was, it hasn’t been the forerunner of a successful U.S. march through the region. Far from it. Popular movements in Central America are too deeply rooted to be dislodged. The U.S. won’t be able to wave its magic wand and pull the region back into the fold. It



will have to compromise if it wants a political settlement.

Revolutionary forces like the FSLN and FMLN and the URNG in Guatemala are in position to extract significant concessions from such a process. Their demands — basic human rights, redistribution of wealth, improved living conditions for workers and campesinos, popular democracy — resonate among broad sectors throughout the region. They've shown great resilience, a willingness to question failed strategies and experiment with new models. The response of the FSLN to their electoral defeat is a case in point: they're looking at their own errors, and opening up a serious process of self-criticism aimed at fighting elitism, strengthening ties with the people, and broadening democratic participation in the Frente. In a world where revolutionary vision is blurred, Central America is one place where a grassroots and democratic approach is being sustained and developed. We should keep our eyes open and our support consistent.

Take a glance around the region. A pivotal battle is now brewing over aid to El Salvador — a battle the movement here could influence. U.S. aid backs up the intransigence of the Salvadoran government,

which so far refuses to even discuss the main FMLN demands — purging the military of human rights violators and demilitarization of Salvadoran society. In Nicaragua, the U.S. has sent Ambassador Harry Schlaudeman to oversee the isolation and destruction of the Sandinistas. (His previous experience includes posts in Chile during the Allende years, Dominican Republic right before the U.S. invasion, and Argentina right after the "dirty war.") The facade of civilian rule has been blown away in Guatemala. U.S. troops still occupy Panama. We've got our work cut out for us.

We also need to look at some of our weaknesses. The Central America movement has been too insular. Other issues have often been treated as unconnected or peripheral; other movements seen merely as constituencies to be organized. True, there's strength in having a sharp focus on Central America, and we shouldn't give that up for a diluted multi-issue agenda. But we need to become a more consistent part of an inter-connected and anti-imperialist network.

Everyone agrees that the anti-intervention movement needs to make links with domestic struggles. What will this really involve? For example, how does



a predominantly white movement deal with our own racism and build respectful and principled ties with people of color? Sometimes this is reduced to concerns about outreach — devising strategies for bringing Black and Latino people into existing Central America organizations. But alliances are built on a two-way street. We need to support struggles against police brutality, prison conditions, racist violence, homelessness. How can people of color relate to a Central America solidarity movement which shows only occasional concern over these life-and-death issues of racism here at home?

The same can be said for our relations with the women's movement, and with gay/lesbian struggles. We're a long way from transforming ourselves into a non-sexist, non-homophobic movement, and we're not going to get there if we don't really open ourselves up for examination and criticism. It's not enough to bring our leaflets to the march against AIDS or the demonstration for reproductive rights. These have to become our issues as well.

Central America work also has to take on the defense of Cuba. After the Nicaragua elections, Vice President Quayle gleefully concluded, "Now, all that's left is Cuba." For over 30 years, the U.S. has attempted to isolate and destroy the Cuban Revolution. Now, it's trying to move in for the kill. Questions do exist about some of Cuba's policies, but this shouldn't translate into lack of support. We need to defend the achievements of Cuban socialism, and

remember the solidarity which Cuba has given to the people of Central America for all these years.

When the U.S. appeared ready to intervene in the recent Nicaragua crisis, phone lines were ringing off the hook in movement offices across the country. People wanted to know what to do, how to respond. The base of the solidarity movement is still out there — somewhat confused and shaken, but still there. We need to reach out right now and educate about the changes in Central America. But we also need to act. Especially when times are difficult, creative direct actions and civil disobedience help keep attention focused and issues alive. This isn't just about standing in solidarity with the people of Central America. It's part of sustaining a culture of resistance right here at home.

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In the articles that follow, long-time activists here, as well as representatives of popular movements in Central America, reflect on the changes that have occurred over the last year and exchange ideas about direction, perspectives, and strategies to strengthen anti-intervention and solidarity work.

We hope that you will add your own voices to this symposium. Please feel free to send in your comments, letters and opinions.

Margaret Power and Robert Roth,  
Prairie Fire Organizing Committee

## Luis Flores, U.S. Representative, FMLN

The first thing we need to analyze is how the progressive and solidarity movements within the U.S. understand recent events around the world and in Central America itself. I believe that mass media propaganda is influencing the movement towards a more negative vision, since the media talks about the burial of socialism as a system and the smashing triumph of capitalism.

This reactionary propaganda campaign has had an impact on the thinking of many left academics and political activists. But it's worth noting that, while speaking of the crisis of socialism in Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R., reactionaries never mention the crisis of capitalism in Latin America and other parts of the world, or that the U.S. itself faces profound social and economic problems.

What's certain is that socialism isn't dead, nor is capitalism triumphant. What's occurring is a crisis of the Stalinist model and a readjustment throughout the world of revolutionary ideology and action. Putting aside the propaganda, it's the responsibility

of revolutionaries to make our own analysis of world events — without excuses or dogmatism — objectively and in a spirit of criticism and self-criticism. The current period demands that we develop new ideas of democratic socialism (I'm not referring to traditional social-democracy here) that have as their basic principles political and economic democracy for all the world's people.

For example, I talked about the crisis of the Stalinist model. Some important points were missing from that model. One of these is political pluralism. One of the biggest mistakes the left around the world has made is allowing the western imperialist countries to claim the concept of "democracy." I haven't read anything that said you couldn't promote political freedom in a socialist society. But this was abandoned in all of Eastern Europe. We think that we have to take up this point strongly right now. Another very important aspect is economic democracy. When you're talking about making a revolution, you're doing it to improve the standard of living

of the population. But you can't feed the people with ideas alone. You have to provide a better material life.

So we're talking about a combination of different new approaches to socialist theory, ones that are not yet fully developed. But these new directions are based on the accumulated experiences of all these revolutions since 1917.

The recent defeat of the Sandinistas and the beginning of negotiations in El Salvador have also had an impact on the solidarity movement, one we still can't quite measure. But we can already see certain signs — like demoralization, confusion and a lack of understanding of the new stage of struggle that is emerging in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala.

People say, "But the Sandinista Front lost the elections in Nicaragua." Yes, they lost the elections. But the people's power they are creating has not been lost, and the people's power of the FMLN in El Salvador is not lost. You have to understand

that in this process you have ups and downs and that's true for any process of social change in any country.

Many people think Central America isn't an important issue at this point. We disagree. Within Latin America, the societies in upheaval are those in Central America and the most advanced are Nicaragua and El Salvador. Within the Latin American context, the greatest possibilities to advance a process of social change are in Central America. These struggles are examples for the whole continent to fight for a more just society in their countries. This is the importance of Central America right now. If Central America gains independence and sovereignty, it will be a setback for the United States. It will bring about new, independent countries, free from U.S. domination.

It's necessary for the movement to digest the new situation in Central America. This situation is affected by the worldwide realignment of forces, the development of new revolutionary ideas, the move to the right of the Central American governments, the continued intervention of the U.S. and the internal dynamics of each country.



Two Salvadoran women chat with an FMLN guerrilla during the November 1989 offensive.

In El Salvador, a complex process is opening, in which the FMLN seeks to change the structures of power by means of a negotiated political solution. For this solution to be favorable it's going to take greater efforts on the military level, in the political struggle within El Salvador, at the international level (both diplomatic and solidarity) and at the negotiating table.

At this point, establishing a true democracy is the most revolutionary goal that we can pursue. Salvadoran society has never tasted democracy. Whenever the people tried to fight for small changes, the reactionary oligarchy rejected them and repressed the population. When you're talking about El Salvador, you're talking about a country where you can be killed if you protest for the simplest reason. We think it's necessary right now to establish the basis in our country for a more advanced, democratic and socialist system.

There are some fundamental necessities that people within the U.S. need to hold onto with regard to El Salvador. First, we need to win the fight to cut all U.S. aid to the Salvadoran government. There also needs to be strong support for the positions of the



FMLN within the negotiations, and those positions need to be made known to the North American public. The strongest degree of political pressure needs to be applied for the demilitarization of Salvadoran society. And material support for the democratic-revolutionary movement remains fundamental — since that has been one of the pillars in sustaining the Salvadoran revolutionary process.

With respect to Nicaragua, it's important to understand — now more than ever — the necessity of offering firm support to the Frente Sandinista in its attempts to defend the gains of the revolution and to regain power through political struggle.

The people of Central America are expecting that

the North American people can put a halt — once and for all — to the intervention of your government, so that it will be possible to establish truly democratic regimes which can eradicate injustice and raise the living standards of our countries. The North American government is going to stubbornly continue in its effort to dominate the people of Central America — a recent example being the invasion of Panama. Therefore, the reason for solidarity continues to exist. This isn't the moment for the movement to retreat. On the contrary, this is a time to launch a renewed offensive that defends and promotes political and economic democracy for all the people of Central America.

## Patricia Elvir, FSLN

*Patricia Elvir began work with the FSLN in 1973. From 1986 to 1990 she was the Secretary General of the Nicaraguan Council of Friendship, Solidarity and Peace and is currently in the North American section of the Department of International Relations of the FSLN.*

The solidarity movement has to demand that the truth be told about what's happening in Nicaragua right now. The Chamorro government is not able nor does it have the desire to follow the program of national reconciliation that was proposed by the FSLN. As a result there is a gigantic political crisis in Nicaragua.

Since April, the government has been trying to apply the IMF model to Nicaragua. They have eliminated all subsidies on transport, pensions for war veterans, the food which was part of workers' payment, the glass of milk each day for primary school students — all of those are gone. There have been twenty-two devaluations of the *cordoba*. We have had nine hundred percent inflation in three months. The salaries have not been revised since the May strike when they were raised 60 percent. A subsidy on healthcare has been eliminated. They're selling all the medicines in the health centers. Furthermore they have refused to supply funds to state enterprises to allow them to buy raw materials. Instead they're saying that these enterprises will have to be sold off or shut down.

The UNO government passed a decree according to which everything which was confiscated from the Somocistas is being reviewed case by case with the possibility that it will be returned to them. According to another decree, the land which was in the hands of

cooperatives or the state is going to be rented to their old owners.

The civil service law which protected public employees from being fired for political reasons or from having their jobs reclassified has also been revised. As a result, almost all public employee positions have been reclassified as so-called "jobs of confidence," and they have the right to dismiss anyone from these jobs whom they feel doesn't deserve them. For example, the Secretary of the Interior, the head of a public business, the head of a school — all political positions — are considered "jobs of confidence." Six hundred workers have been dismissed because of this. They want to have a state in which the FSLN will have no positions whatsoever.

The July general strike was in response to all of this. It began with the workers from state enterprises demanding state funds to purchase raw materials and campesinos protesting the plans to take land from cooperatives and state farms to rent to their previous owners. They were joined by state employees, bank, telephone, health and public transport workers, and students. The demands of the strike were: (1) an immediate payment of funds to keep state industries open; (2) an increase in the minimum wage to \$200; (3) a rescinding of the decree permitting cooperative and state lands to be rented; (4) the rehiring of all dismissed workers; (5) a rescinding of the decree reviewing all expropriated property; (6) renewed subsidies for public transport; (7) the revision of pensions for war veterans; (8) reinstatement of the special stipend for teachers working in rural areas; and (9) a review of police salaries, along with other demands.

It's clearer than ever that the only political force in the country that can lead in this crisis is the FSLN.



We have to carry out a period of discussion among the people and among ourselves about how we are going to carry on with this struggle, taking into account the new reality in the world and also examining our mistakes and limitations. We are determined and are preparing ourselves to come back and be in the government in 1996. It's our desire that the FSLN organize itself to guarantee that there isn't a single setback in the gains of the revolutionary government for the people.

The U.S. and the most reactionary people in UNO are desperately trying to brainwash the minds of the youth and to wipe out any trace of the Sandinista message. The messages on TV are so simple: Live your life without problems; forget about everyone else; the country is not important; dream of development, how marvelous the United States and foreign countries are; forget about our culture; forget about the heroes and the martyrs. They have painted over the FSLN graffiti and put out the flame on the tomb of Carlos Fonseca. They have removed all the statues around Managua commemorating where martyrs have fallen.

In a letter sent to Violetta Chamorro during the May strike, Elliot Abrams wrote, "Don't accept a single negotiation with these strikers. If the Sandinistas get people out in the street, get reactionaries out in the street yourself." The first "donation" from A.I.D. came with a contract stipulating that the funds be

given to private producers who are returning to Nicaragua to reclaim their lands. These conditions don't allow us to solve the problems of Nicaragua.

It may sound like an exaggeration, but it's the truth. The positions of the UNO government are a result of U.S. pressure and must be denounced. We want that pressure removed and to be left in peace.

One of the problems in the solidarity movement is the question of unity. I think that sacrifice is missing in which you lay aside your personal sentiments for the good of the movement. I think you have to apply the principle of self-criticism within the solidarity movement, in the same way that the FSLN is doing. We are holding up a mirror and looking at really what we are. The solidarity movement has to do the same thing. You have to push aside everything which is blocking you from working more efficiently. Some people are going to have to become a bit more low profile, some will have to be a bit more assertive, but the most basic thing of all is that we form a solidarity movement that is capable of bringing in a new person each day and not forcing anyone out. We must always have our doors open and not leave any way out!

We need solidarity to keep up the work of the FSLN, an organization which represents Sandino, the patriotism and dignity of Nicaragua, and the new mentality of a poor people who feel the urge to stand on their own feet.

## Frank LaRue, Unitary Representation of the Guatemalan Opposition

*Frank LaRue is a Guatemalan labor lawyer in Washington, DC, carrying out educational work about Guatemala and working as part of a legal team representing Guatemalan human rights organizations at the international level. He last visited Guatemala in May of 1989 to participate in the national dialogue on behalf of the Representación Unitaria de la Oposición Guatemalteca (RUOG), an organization of Guatemalans living in exile.*

As a result of recent changes in the world and in the Central American region, there has also been a dramatic change in U.S. policy toward the region as a whole, and to Guatemala in particular. For the anti-intervention and solidarity movement in the U.S. to remain relevant, we have to understand these changes.

First of all, the end of the Cold War with the Soviet Union and the collapse of Eastern Europe as a military pact has undoubtedly altered the percep-

tion of the world for many strategists in the United States. Small regional conflicts are no longer seen as a threat within a bipolar world where everything is part of that worldwide confrontation. Central America is no longer perceived in terms of an East-West conflict, but is more understood now as an internal problem. In that sense it is less of a threat for the United States, because, although whatever happens in small countries in Central America can seriously affect the region, they certainly cannot affect the national security of the United States.

Secondly, the growing international economic confrontation has forced new priorities on the U.S. It needs to expand its markets and its economic influence — in North America, of course, but also in Eastern Europe where it must develop an economic model similar to its own, make it viable, and invest in this interesting new market. Eastern Europe may be in crisis, but it certainly has a totally different economic capacity than the Third World countries

do, especially Latin America or Africa. Another priority is China, the biggest market in the Pacific Basin. The U.S. handling of the relationship with China, especially at the national security level, makes this clear.

With these other priorities in sight, this political and economic concentration of resources, clearly Central America plays a lesser role in U.S. policy. With the sole exception of Mexico, that for geographic reasons has a different type of importance for the U.S., there is an attempt to downplay Latin America and the economic crisis that is occurring in that region. So one of the conclu-

sions of the changing dynamic in the world is that the U.S. will change its policy in Central America because 1) the region is no longer as important as it used to be; and 2) it is not a perceived risk to U.S. national security.

Clearly, with the weakening of the Soviet Union and the transition away from the Cold War, and also with the European countries defining their priorities towards the EEC, the U.S. has consolidated its hegemonic domination over this hemisphere. And we've seen a right-wing swing that has swept the rest of Central America, as it has the Latin American region. We have Calderon elected in Costa Rica, Chamorro in Nicaragua, Callejas in Honduras, and Cristiani in El Salvador.

But this also means that the U.S. has to be more careful of the image it projects in that role. The U.S.

could get away with the invasion of Panama because it launched a major campaign delegitimizing the government of Noriega. Legitimacy plays a very important role, because at this moment in the world there is a battle of images. So it is important for the U.S. to consolidate these regimes, and to try to demonstrate that they are democratic.

Interestingly enough, the true expression of democracy came from the Frente Sandinista in allowing the elections to occur and in permitting a real transition of power in Nicaragua. This is as big a challenge now in terms of democracy, as the revolution in 1979 was to the dictatorship of Somoza. This puts the U.S. in a difficult position because, on the one hand, it wants to strengthen these conservative governments, and on the other, it has to legitimize them as democratic.

In Guatemala, these international and regional factors are converging with one of the most acute crises in its history. With the election of Cerezo four and a half years ago, the military hoped that the transition to a civilian government would legitimize the atrocities of past





regimes and create the international perception that Guatemala was a working democracy with a constitutional framework. Although Cerezo won his election by a landslide, it is very clear to the population of Guatemala today that Cerezo has meant no real change in the power structure. The transition to civilian rule never took power out of the hands of the military, which has continued to be a force in every major state decision.

Not only has the Cerezo government failed to bring about a transition to civilian rule and a more democratic society, but it has brought with it corruption and drug trafficking. This government has ended up being one of the most corrupt governments in the history of the country. For instance, A.I.D. recently cancelled funds for health assistance to Guatemala because of a scandal developing around the disappearance of \$3 million in aid. The official candidate of the Christian Democrats, Alfonso Cabrera, is allegedly linked to drug trafficking, and some articles in the international media have speculated that Guatemala could eventually replace Panama as a transit point in drug trafficking to the U.S. and drug money laundering.

Finally, the government has been totally incapable of organizing a viable economic program to reduce the effects of the world economic crisis. Much to the contrary, the traditional policies of the IMF imposed on Guatemala as in all Latin America have affected the poor more; and secondly, the government has relied entirely on the business sector with the result that the population has never been as poor as it is now. In the last May 1st demonstration the biggest demand was for food. The issues were hunger, poverty, the need for food, the need to increase wages just to a survival level. The devaluation of the *quetzal* has provoked a high rate of inflation and a reduction in purchasing power. What people earned two or three years ago is a very small fraction of what a decent salary would be at this moment. This is provoking a very explosive situation. We are likely to see in Guatemala the same sort of expressions of popular unrest we've seen in other parts of South America, such as food riots. Uprisings of this sort will inevitably increase repression.

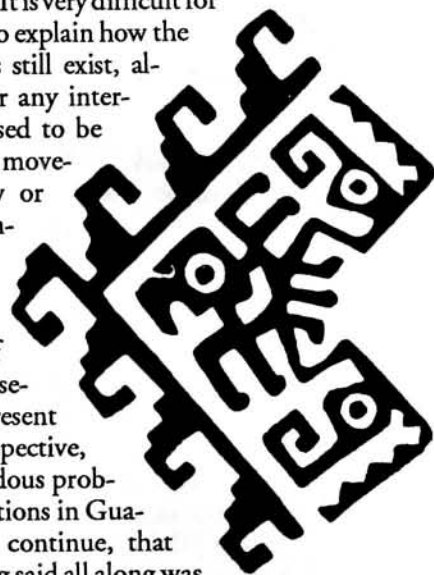
All of this is creating a very critical situation where people are beginning to call for a new democratic model to stop the armed conflict, as well as a new model of economic development to allow Guatemala to come out of this crisis. For the first time in many years we can seriously envision a possibility of transition through negotiations.

It is in the best interests of the U.S. now to reduce the level of violence and killing by repressive regimes in the region, especially in Guatemala and El Salvador, to reduce human rights violations, to eliminate the disappearances and torture, and to seek some solution to the armed conflicts. The armed conflicts

that subsist in Guatemala and El Salvador have become the real challenge. It is very difficult for conservatives in the U.S. to explain how the revolutionary movements still exist, although there is no longer any international conspiracy. It used to be that the rationale for these movements was that Moscow or somewhere else was planning them, trying to promote revolution in Latin America to weaken the U.S. Of course, that argument is useless now; no one can present this as a legitimate perspective, and this creates a tremendous problem because, if the revolutions in Guatemala and El Salvador continue, that proves that what was being said all along was absolutely true. These revolutions, these armed conflicts, grew out of the internal conditions of poverty, exploitation, and repression of the people in those nations. And there was no international reason for these conflicts to grow. They were not planned or promoted from abroad; they were specifically a response of their own population towards dictatorial military regimes. And this is being proven today.

So the U.S. is pursuing a regional goal, to try to seek a solution to the armed conflicts. I think that this is valid for Guatemala and El Salvador as well. We are seeing the same type of signals in both countries. It's important for them to create some degree of stability in the region at this moment. And they can allow themselves to solve the conflicts through negotiations because of the non-threatening character of the region at this moment. They no longer feel threatened by the URNG or the FMLN. So they seem genuinely interested in initiating a process of negotiation. Of course, what they see as negotiations, or what they may want to achieve, may be dramatically different or totally contrary to what the URNG or the FMLN are seeing as negotiations.

But the important issue is to begin the process of negotiation. All sectors, within the country and in the U.S. and Europe, are seeing negotiations as an absolute necessity, and the Western European community is demanding immediate peace in the region. You can hear it from the peoples in these countries. And at the same time you begin to recognize that the U.S. has a lot to gain from a process of trying to negotiate such a peace. With the convergence of all these forces, I think negotiations for the first time have a chance. No one knows where they will end, but the fact that they begin also provokes its own dynamic. It creates an inertia that will then develop into different solutions depending on the proposals and on the process.





## Kathy Kelly, Nicaragua Solidarity Committee Chicago

*Kathy Kelly has been involved in Chicago peace and justice activities for the past 12 years. She served a year in prison for entering nuclear missile silos in Missouri with 14 other people and scattering corn, bird seeds and flowers, while waiting to be arrested. She now works as a part-time staff member for the Chicago-area Nicaragua Solidarity Committee, part of the Nicaragua Network supporting the gains of the Nicaraguan revolution.*

We can claim as a strength that the U.S. did not invade Nicaragua. If our movement had not been present, it is quite possible that the U.S. would have tried for a surgical strike, would have tried essentially for what we saw in Panama or Grenada. The movement was strong enough to say, "You will not be able to do this."

I think that the steady flow of people going down to Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, giving witness to what they had seen and heard certainly helped to educate the movement, to allow us to be educated by Third World people and it certainly helped to deepen the commitment. When I was at a forum on Central American issues recently, I looked around the room. We were people who had worked together for ten long years and I didn't see significant burnout. People were energized and ready to continue. So I think that is to our credit.

We also learned how to work in coalition. We learned a lot about disclosing to one another who we are and where we are coming from and continuing to search to figure out what our principles and values are. A lot of trust has been built up.

We experimented with a resistance mode of living that has been very life-giving for many and appropriate for the long haul.

It's more than just a fling. If we are interested in being sincere resisters, then we have to recognize that there are certain jobs that we can't get or we're likely to get fired from. We have built a community that gives approval to people who perhaps aren't going to make it in mainstream jobs. Not because they don't have the brilliance or the competence, but because they would say things that won't earn them approval or certainly a promotion.

Power, prestige and privilege were extolled by

Reaganism as the cheese at the end of the maze. You see in the resistance movement people who say, "Well, we aren't going to be bribed by that. We simply won't compromise the values that we hold more deeply so that we can get more property or privilege or prestige in this society, because, in fact, we feel alienated by this society."

I think that the formation of these pockets of resistance is extremely important for this country and for identification with activity throughout the Third World. We need to make these communities visible to one another. It's too easy for us to feel isolated. We can get stale. The more that people just show how strong the movement against U.S. imperialism is and how essentially unfair the lifestyle that has been adopted by this culture is, the better.

Although we were in touch with the sufferings of people in Central America, we weren't touched so much that we would begin to take on the kinds of risks that any soldier takes on, who, perhaps unthinkingly, decides to lay down his or her life for their country. I don't think that we took on the laws of this country in ways that were serious. I think we ended up in little skirmishes. What I would have liked to have seen is the same kind of courage which motivated people in Witness for Peace to go and live in a war zone motivate us here, to get involved in sustained acts of resistance, that would communicate to other people — and I think it is the nonviolent ones which communicate best. But that would have also cost us — jobs, freedom, perhaps a whole future orientation to our lives and money too. I am sorry that the war tax resistance movement didn't grow more in the last decade. That type of resistance was not evidenced enough. We didn't show it to each other and it was not evidenced to broader numbers.

When I was in Nicaragua fasting with Miguel D'Escoto, he certainly galvanized a whole country's willingness to escalate the risks, while they were already in the middle of risk. He said, "Go back to your country, and tell the people they have to take actions commensurate with the crimes being committed." I don't go to confession in the Catholic Church anymore, but I'm not opposed to doing an examination of conscience; and I have to say that it was certainly not the norm for us to be taking actions commensurate with the crimes being committed. The phrase "No Business as Usual" became real popular in that time; but I found myself returning to my usual business.

The more we see of people who are willing to engage in a lengthy life-threatening fast, the more



that we see people willing to sustain these actions and not cooperate with the authorities and risk the possibility of being in jail for weeks and months and possibly years, rather than four hours, the more we will see others taking notice of what we are doing — and by others I certainly mean people of other classes, racial and ethnic backgrounds that are not part of the power structure of this country, but who may be susceptible or vulnerable to our message. I don't believe that street actions where we don't take responsibility for what has been done — the kind of hit and split motif — have as much power to speak to those people who have been disenfranchised and left out of the power structure in this country. And, of course, throughout, we have to have people who are willing to interpret and get the message of these actions communicated to broader sectors in this society. That is always an essential element.

As for Nicaragua, at this point it is essential to let

the Nicaraguans know that we will not forsake the gains of the revolution. Material aid should continue to go down to Nicaragua through projects we believe we can trust. People should keep their networks intact and do everything possible to restrain U.S. intervention. U.S. aid is still going to the contras, unfair deals are being made. As the contras are demobilizing, they are getting bribes and land. It's important that we let the FSLN and the representatives of the mass organizations know that they have a continued voice in this country. We need to open up avenues for their press to get through, and to have people from there come up here and speak. We also have to recognize that in Nicaragua, in the triumph of low intensity warfare, the U.S. succeeded all too well with a policy that some think tank was surely very confident about. Now they will be even more confident about it. So we need to organize ourselves to resist low intensity conflict.

## Darla Rucker & Ken Butigan, Pledge of Resistance

*Ken Butigan is national coordinator of the Pledge of Resistance. Darla Rucker is Development Director. Since 1985, there have been over 12,000 arrests in Pledge-sponsored civil disobedience actions at Congressional offices, federal buildings, military installations, the Pentagon and the U.S. Capitol.*

### NOW MORE THAN EVER

The Pledge and the wider Central America movement have confronted one shock after another since last November: the brutal military crackdown on the people of El Salvador, in the wake of the FMLN offensive; the U.S. invasion of Panama in December; and the Sandinistas' loss in the February 25 Nicaraguan elections. At a time when Soviet retrenchment should, in an ideal world, lead to a similar move by the U.S. (especially when the "Soviet threat" has been used to rationalize world-wide U.S. intervention for the last half-century), we learn yet again how far we are from the ideal. Instead of extending the climate of *perestroika* and *glasnost* to its own self-styled "sphere of influence," the U.S. has taken advantage of the Soviet realignment to attempt to consolidate its position in the Third World, especially in Central America.

As long as U.S. policy continues to dominate and endanger the people of Central America, the Pledge will play a strong role in resisting this policy through nonviolent direct action, even as the justifications for

this course begin to shift — or, at least, expand. Given the recent changes in Eastern Europe and in East-West relations, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the U.S. to justify waging war in Central America as a fight "against the communists." While the Pledge will continue to challenge the old excuses for intervention, it is beginning to work strenuously against the new one — the "drug war." Although the Pledge has focused primarily on the countries of Central America, we are increasingly concerned about the expansion of U.S. intervention throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly under the guise of "the war on drugs."

The Pledge was founded on the fear that a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua was imminent. We have helped keep that threat from becoming a reality, but also we have come to the knowledge that U.S. intervention has taken a much more insidious route than invasion. The use of "low intensity" warfare has become the threat we must work against.

The U.S. has successfully starved the people of Nicaragua to the point that they felt they must elect Violetta Chamorro to feed their children. In Peru and Colombia, the "drug war" becomes the reason behind an increased military presence and budget. In Panama, we use drugs to give us permission to invade; and the administration, with the media's help, is so convincing that even a large portion of the left believes it. In the Philippines (under cover of a Duarte-style Aquino presidency), we have massive U.S. involvement; and Cuba has survived thirty



years of low intensity war.

The U.S. military is currently being restructured almost exclusively for intervention in the Third World. It's very clear that Europe no longer needs defending and wants our military out, and the threat of nuclear war is lessening. The four branches of the U.S. military are now arguing over which one of them can best intervene in the Third World (and claim the biggest part of the military budget).

If the events of the last ten years — and certainly the last six months — teach us anything, it is that

war to kill thousands of Panamanians.

But we must do more. Precisely because this policy is so tenacious, it is clear that our work must increasingly focus on the underlying causes of intervention. We must link the specific policies (arms to El Salvador, disinformation about Nicaragua, etc.) to the dominant paradigm from which they spring — a paradigm of power which is fundamentally racist and classist and which has simultaneous foreign and domestic costs. The dimensions of this paradigm — militarism, economic domination and

exploitation, religious fundamentalism, and propaganda warfare — shape U.S. counter-insurgency in Central America, but also counter-insurgency here at home.

After ten years of work, many in the Central America movement are admitting that to transform U.S. policy in that part of the world means to address the roots of the crisis, including the structures of exploitation, greed and death which grind on at home and abroad. The tenacity of the policy stems from the fact that it is a war against the poor; to retire from that battle would jeopardize the dominant U.S. culture which is founded on such a war.

In this next period, the Pledge will be tak-

ing a conscious step in this direction by making explicit connections with domestic issues which deal with "U.S. intervention at home," linking U.S. military policy in Central America to the ongoing economic and psychological attack on the people of the United States and demanding a slashed military budget to meet human needs in this country.

Most importantly, we look forward to increasing our strength as a true grassroots organization that helps people bring their voices into the streets and helps bring greater unity and clearer vision to the progressive movement, as we gather courage to stay together and carry on in our common quest for a world where the systematic abuse of all beings both within and without one's own borders is unthinkable.



U.S. policy in Central America is as tenacious as it is brutal. The tactics, for political reasons, may change, but the objectives remain the same: to re-establish U.S. economic, political, and military hegemony. Recent events, therefore, only convince us even more of the need for nonviolent direct actions — to resist the rollback of the gains of the Sandinista revolution, to continue to erode the political capital which has been mustered for aid to El Salvador and Guatemala, and to dramatically and creatively denounce the deepening colonization of an already colonized nation, Panama. Moreover, the Pledge must find ways to direct special focus to the shockingly unspeakable crimes we have just witnessed: the ten-year strangulation of the people of Nicaragua, and the deployment of the largest military force since the Vietnam

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## Mike Davis, U.S.-El Salvador Institute for Democratic Development

*Mike Davis is a founding member and former national coordinator of CISPES. Currently he is the Executive Director of the U.S.-El Salvador Institute for Democratic Development, which works for a political solution to the war in El Salvador by establishing contact between the FMLN and the North American public and raising humanitarian aid for the FMLN.*

The last year has been a time of fast-paced change throughout the world, shaking the foundations of every belief system and undermining many of our basic assumptions. It is a time when revolutionary forces in Central America and the solidarity movement in the United States must reassess its direction, abandoning old concepts which do not fit today's situation. The greatest mistake we could make is to believe that change is now impossible, whether that be a change in U.S. policy, revolutionary change in Central America, or social progress in the world in general.

The current process of change in socialist countries has raised doubts about the prospects for the development of more just societies. These changes are not so much a negation of socialism as they are a rejection of an out-dated and dysfunctional model of socialism. One of the more negative aspects of the "collapse of the socialist bloc" has been the end of their role as a counter balance to the United States in the Third World. This situation of unipolarity is what permitted the United States to invade Panama. In addition, it is now clear that no emerging revolutionary society can count on the same type of support that Cuba has received for the last thirty years.

Far more dangerous for world stability is the process of transformation which world capitalism is currently undergoing. The end of U.S. economic hegemony has created a level of competition among the major capitalist powers on a level unseen since the Second World War. They are increasingly tending towards investment in the advanced industrialized countries with some investment in Eastern Europe and pockets of the Third World which are attached to the major industrial centers, such as the Pacific Rim and northern Mexico. In this process of reorganization, profit by far takes priority over political-economic stability.

The neo-liberal (free market) economic models which are being imposed on the Third World by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank

have led to further impoverishment and social instability throughout Latin America. Old models of dependent development and reform counter-insurgency programs (such as those implemented as part of the Alliance for Progress) are being quickly abandoned as resources are sucked out of the Third World through debt payments and the lowest possible prices imposed on the raw materials produced in those countries.

The objective conditions for revolution throughout Latin America have never been greater. The lack of any real program for achieving social stability is making the U.S.-sponsored political model of restricted democracy (nominal civilian rule with the military serving as the ultimate arbiter of power) more difficult to maintain. The demand for the establishment of real political democracy is now the central revolutionary demand for the Latin American left.

The reality of the international situation and U.S. influence in Latin America make the development of "purely socialist" models of revolution difficult at this time. Some accommodation to the interests of the United States and domestic capitalists will be necessary for all of the revolutions of Latin America.

These tendencies are particularly sharp in the case of Central America which is already in the midst of a revolutionary situation. Despite some setbacks, revolutionary projects will move forward. The challenge for the revolutionary movements will be to retranslate political and military strength into the political power to create a real democratic option.

In El Salvador, last November's FMLN offensive proved to everyone except the extreme right that a military victory over the FMLN was impossible. The offensive was also strong enough to prove to leading right-wing business leaders that there would be no possibility of economic revitalization or profits until the war was brought to an end. The center and the left have begun to form a strong opposition bloc, isolating the fascist sectors of ARENA and the military. All of these factors have combined to create the conditions for U.N.-sponsored talks on El Salvador, which are bringing about the possibility of a real negotiated political solution. Such a solution depends on the political and military strength of the democratic/revolutionary movement. A lessening of U.S. support to the Salvadoran government would greatly contribute to such a solution.

Many in the Central America movement have analyzed the great successes of U.S. policy, including the invasion of Panama and the election of Chamorro, as indications of U.S. invincibility. A closer look reveals that the situation is far from under control. Resistance in Panama to U.S. occupation is growing. The FSLN remains the single strongest political force in Nicaragua leading massive strikes and mobilizations; the Sandinista Popular Army remains intact under the leadership of Humberto Ortega; and UNO is split over whether to try to completely destroy the revolution or to compromise with it. The Bush administration had a very difficult time passing its \$800 million aid package for Panama and Nicaragua. This indicates that, in U.S. ruling circles, there is a lack of enthusiasm for investing the level of resources that would be necessary to consolidate these counter-revolutionary gains.

Current U.S. policy is erratic and unpredictable. On the one hand, there is an apparent openness to political solutions in Central America; on the other hand, military force is being made more and more of an option.

Now more than ever exists the need for an active opposition movement to U.S. intervention in Central America. The solidarity movement has had a tremendous impact on U.S. foreign policy toward Central America. The movement must continue to exist, utilizing all of its time-tested tactics of protest and resistance. Political confusion cannot be used as an excuse for inaction. The key to a strategy of resistance is continuity. To cease to mobilize at a time when U.S. foreign policy is in a process of flux and, therefore, extremely vulnerable to pressure,

would be a tragic mistake.

The current situation also presents us with real opportunities. U.S. foreign policy has lost many of its political justifications. The demand for a U.S. policy that promotes democratization must become a central part of our discourse. We must develop arguments which can clearly speak to centers of power in the United States and challenge the argument that real U.S. interests are represented by continued intervention. These arguments can take even more weight when brought to the vast majority of the American people who are tired of supporting wars that seem to have no justification.

The development of a broader discourse cannot and should not ever be used as an excuse for backing off from support for the liberation forces themselves. Revolutionary movements in Central America — the FMLN, the FSLN, the URNG — represent the key forces working for real democratic change. They have a right to receive aid from the people of the United States. The rulers of our country must recognize that these are legitimate representative forces with whom they must coexist and with whom they can develop cooperative relations.

This is not a time of flashy short-term victories. This is, however, the turning point for Central America and for U.S. foreign policy. Victory depends on the ability of the revolutionary movements in Central America to turn the world situation to their advantage and also on the solidarity movement transcending the confusion of the moment. We need to keep on a clear path of confronting U.S. intervention and broadening support for democracy and social change in the Central American region.

## Fulani Sunni-Ali, African Women's Caucus

*Fulani Sunni-Ali is a member of the African Women's Caucus, a group of Black women carrying out cultural/political work in Atlanta's Black community. She has been involved for many years in Cuba solidarity work through SAMECA, the Southern Arts Media Education Connections Association, and produces a weekly TV program entitled SAMECA. She is co-host of a weekly radio show (news, music and information) on WRFG and works for the American Friends Service Committee's South-eastern Regional Disarmament Program.*

The Central America support movement in the U.S. is primarily a middle class white movement. From my perspective as a person in the Black Libera-

tion Movement, and also as one who has worked at my nine-to-five in the social justice movement for the last three years, I think that in order for us as Black people to be able to do solidarity work with white people in this movement, they are going to have to come to an understanding of who they are and why they are where they are, because they are standing on the back of oppressed people themselves. It seems to be very difficult for middle class folks to accept that analysis and act accordingly. So they don't accept it, which means they don't work around domestic issues because that begins to challenge their own values and their own place. A lot of folk have opted to work in solidarity with struggles that are outside this country — Asian-Pacific work, Central America, any other issue than the issue of the op-



pressed within the United States.

Within the Central America support movement, they have isolated Black people and other people of color. They seem to feel that they have almost "copyrighted the movement" — that it's theirs. White people often have a lot more access to information than Black people. There are a lot of reasons for that, but the information doesn't trickle down to the grassroots movement. Very often people withhold information because they're afraid that once it gets out they can't control the situation. Racism plays itself out by not including Black perspectives in the strategy and planning of the work. Instead people of color, and Black people particularly, are used on different brigades and tours to present the facade of a multicultural movement.

In Nicaragua, the white Central America solidarity movement has opted to work with everybody they can in Nicaragua except for the Black people on the Atlantic Coast. One group, Witness for Peace, has a Black person that does organizing on the Atlantic Coast; and she has taken over a number of Black delegations just to go to the Atlantic Coast, because they're being totally ignored by the Central America solidarity movement at large. And so they are taking their racism from border to border and even in the struggle in Nicaragua, they have opted to just totally leave out the whole question of the autonomy of Africans on the Atlantic Coast.

When I've met people from El Salvador, they were totally awed by the history of our struggle and the history of Black people in relation to solidarity with other oppressed people. And they are very warmed that we have that feeling of solidarity. Which means to me that, to a large degree, those who have done work and related to that particular movement have not expressed any of this, have not bothered to talk about the struggle and movement overall in this country. So therefore people don't have clear perspectives on the larger anti-imperialist movement here.

Within the Central America movement, I've noticed and started to analyze why there is no outcry of support for Cuba. I think it goes back to my earlier point. When the white middle class looks at struggles such as those in Cuba, they somehow can't separate themselves from what Cuba stands for and what that means to the imperialist powers here. So they opt to deal with other struggles, other countries which haven't taken such unequivocal positions. And it's easier then.

The Central America support movement right now needs to support Cuba, because by not doing so that is sending a message to the powers that be, to the U.S. government, that it also does not agree with Cuba's existence and its form of government; and it says that people are willing to work all around this tiny country, everybody else in Central America



except Cuba. It makes a statement whether they want to or not. It says nobody is going to touch this. Nobody is going to support this little country. And it also makes Cuba and its supporters much more vulnerable if there is only a small handful of people who are supporting them.

We in the Black Liberation Movement have a lot to be grateful to Cuba for. This goes back to when they began to receive people who had to flee for many reasons: Robert Williams, Eldridge Cleaver, Huey Newton. In the early days, Kwame Turé visited there and was almost received like a head of state. Since then, they have accepted political prisoners, exiles, whom no country would have touched, like Assata Shakur. Obviously other countries were very afraid to put their hands on that case, because this is someone who escaped jail, who they have claimed is a murderer and a terrorist. The Cuban government saw through that and saw her as a heroine of our movement. They said, "Come to Cuba," and they did the same for Puerto Rican Freedom Fighter Guillermo Morales and Fela, Antar and Macheo from the Republic of New Afrika.

Upon my first visit to Cuba, one of the things that surprised me was the high percentage of the population — more than half — who are indigenous mulatto or Afro-Cuban, as they like to say. And I began to look at how they live, I began to look at the



system and I began to talk to a lot of them about how things were before the revolution and how they are now. It was very clear to me that even though a lot of folks there have problems — because there is no system that exists without flaws — they do not welcome any interference from the United States government. The people love Fidel and the comrades who led the fight that turned their lives around when the revolution triumphed in 1959.

Today, there are forces all over the world that are trying to pressure the Cuban government to change its system, who are claiming "Socialism is dead, communism is dead. Come on, Fidel, change and become capitalist. See it our way, play our game, play by our standards." And it's not Fidel who is leading the outcry of "No, we will not accept that kind of change." The people themselves realize, if they do that, they are going to go back to before '59 when the whole Afro-Cuban population was prevented from being educated, from therefore being able to work and have businesses, from being able to really develop to their fullest potential. So the people are saying no to imperialism, intervention or the return of exiles as leaders.

In this coming decade, the U.S. military will step

up their low intensity conflict strategy, which is really a high intensity form of counter-insurgency. We saw this used in Libya, Grenada, in Panama, in Nicaragua; we are definitely looking at it in El Salvador and it's what they plan for Cuba. The peace movement and the Central America movement are aware of this and perhaps their lack of support for Cuba is because they are also afraid of it — if they support the "wrong" folks they too will fall victim to this low intensity warfare strategy. They'll be harassed they'll be locked up; they'll go before grand juries. This is the kind of fear I think a lot of whites have and it's unfortunate.

Cuba has symbolized a place that has been willing as small a nation as it is, to stand up against the giant imperialist. I think we who believe in freedom need to be very much in support of Cuba, because it is the shining example that you don't have to compromise principles in order to remain free. The concepts that we have of freedom are somehow linked to dependence on the imperialist system in order to survive. Cuba is showing us that even though they have sacrificed so much to remain free and independent, they will sacrifice even more to maintain that freedom and independence.

## Women Against Imperialism

*Women Against Imperialism is an organization of lesbians and straight women in the San Francisco Bay Area, linking feminism and anti-imperialism in the women's and anti-intervention movements. WAI is actively involved in international solidarity, reproductive rights, AIDS, lesbian liberation and political prisoner defense work and organizes to stop violence against women. This article was written collectively by Glendi Henion, Linda Sudak, Robin Candace, Teeka James and Judith Mirkinson.*

*"We're angry women and we're here to say, Down with the Army and the CIA!"*

*— heard in the streets, at the Presidio, in recruiting stations...*

Ask anybody in the Central America solidarity movement about this chant and most people know why we're angry and why we want to do away with the army and the CIA. But wait, we're also talking about ourselves as women. Making a point of it, in fact, as we organize against U.S. intervention.

In this symposium we want to focus on the role of women. We want to talk about the sexism and

homophobia so rampant in our society and so prevalent in the Central America solidarity movement — sexism and homophobia that both hold back the movement from growing, prevent it from developing some of its most vital participants, and that hinder it from building alliances with some of the most committed activists.

We're quite aware of the fact that the Central America movement is not unique in its failure to address the issue of sexism. There's a line in the world that says that feminism is passé, no longer necessary, that everybody (especially men) know all about sexism and that it just is no longer a real problem.

In reality, sexism and male supremacy are alive and well. Women are still objectified. Violence against women is continually rising. Our control over our own bodies is under severe attack. Healthcare, education, and childcare have been deemed disposable. The situation for women of color has reached genocidal proportions. One just has to look at the infant mortality rates, homelessness, and the AIDS epidemic to see that this is true.

The imbalance of power between women and men permeates every aspect of daily life, including political interactions. Women, ask yourselves, have

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you ever sat in a meeting, voiced an idea which goes unnoticed; then five minutes later a man says the *same* thing and it is immediately applauded? Have you been afraid of being labeled "divisive" because you feel like you're always the one pointing out the preferential treatment given to men? Have you ever been dyke-baited? Were you ever looking forward to attending a particular program only to find out there's no childcare? Have you ever been in the streets feeling strong, only to have men either telling you what to do or jumping into the fray to "protect" you and to provide "muscle?" Have you experienced the frustration of having your coalition meeting scheduled at the same time as an AIDS march, without consideration of that as an important conflict?

And to the men we want to ask: Do you ever worry about sexism? When called on it, do you think "it's just her problem" and "why is she/they bothering me?" Do you ever think that maybe you should remain silent so that women can express their ideas? Do you ever think that women

may be better than you at providing security at a march? Do you offer to do childcare? Do you offer to coordinate childcare for an event? Do you ever go to a reproductive rights demonstration?

Think about it. The answer to at least one of these questions, if not all, is sure to be "yes" if you're a woman, and "no" if you're a man.

We want this to change. We want a movement that values women's contributions and fosters women's leadership. We know that this will never happen unless women have the ability to organize together. We need time amongst ourselves to develop our ideas about the political work we are involved in, as well as the dynamics we experience doing that work. We need a space where we are not afraid that sexism will disrupt our process, and this can only happen without men in the room. We need to be able to identify the male supremacy that we experience. And we need to be able to transform ourselves and our society.

When someone makes a homophobic remark and you think, "It's not about me," think twice. Lesbians and gay men need to feel supported by the straight people we work with. We must feel confident that everyone believes it is in their interest that homophobia be eradicated. We know women cannot be truly liberated unless we are also free to love ourselves and one another. It is simply not enough for support for lesbian and gay liberation to be limited to rhetoric, a phrase in a leaflet or a chant in a march through the Castro in San Francisco.

In addition to changing our own organizations



through consciousness-raising and struggle, the Central America movement should actively work to change the conditions of women's lives. Women's marches like International Women's Day and Take Back the Night are important places to talk about women around the world. But that's not all they are. They raise the issues that are vital to women, like violence against women, reproductive rights and lesbian invisibility. They also talk about healthcare and childcare that women need in order to lead productive lives. They empower women by letting us show our strength in the streets. This is also true when women march together in women's contingents in Central America marches or have women-only actions. We're not excluding men, we're *including women*. Unfortunately, for the most part the Central America movement is neither interested in these events nor does it support them.

We can also learn from women around the world. Central American women have shown strength and creativity in fighting back against the repressive forces in their lives — to stop the U.S.-backed military violence, to demand the return of their "disappeared" children, and to maintain their families. They have worked together in committees and organizations to change their role in society and gain respect for the role they have played. Women's day-care centers, clinics for abused women, women's work collectives and labor committees have played a significant role in making women feel empowered.

Women coming from other countries often take great risks to be with us and talk to us; we should

"Keep your hands off our bodies." Take Back The Night, women's march, San Francisco, 1989

begin to challenge ourselves to take risks as well. Wouldn't it be an inspiration to see yourself and your sisters around the world reflected in all the political work you're involved in? It is up to us to make this happen.

How then do we raise consciousness about women? By including women's demands in all po-

litical talks, analysis, writing, organizing women's delegations. By identifying sexism and homophobia when it happens. By supporting women's actions and demonstrations. By understanding that the demands of women for liberation are fundamental, and not for sometime "after the revolution." Put *this* on your next agenda.

## Brad Erickson, Environmental Project on Central America

*Brad Erickson is the editor of the recent book, Call To Action: Handbook for Ecology, Peace and Justice. He is the National Campaigner for the Environmental Project on Central America. EPOCA's current campaign is mobilizing environmentalists to oppose aid to El Salvador.*

### RED MEETS GREEN

While the U.S. government basks in its successful invasions of Nicaragua and Panama, the solidarity movement is evaluating its accomplishments, its limitations, and discussing strategies for the 1990s.

Mainstream critics of U.S. policy in Central America portray the criminal acts of the U.S. government — Contra terror, aid to El Salvador, and the invasion of Panama — as unfortunate exceptions to an otherwise benevolent political agenda. Movement attempts to mobilize the mainstream against intervention in El Salvador, for instance, kept the country in the news, but the narrow focus of the campaign unintentionally supported the impression that U.S. involvement in El Salvador is an aberration rather than the epitome of U.S. policy.

As the U.S. waged an economic embargo against the three million citizens of Nicaragua, it wages another economic embargo at home by denying the basic right to shelter to three million of its own citizens. Failure to connect intervention in Central America with domestic injustice has limited resistance to U.S. Central America policy to a mostly white middle class movement. A social change movement that stops short of a visionary program for a radical restructuring of the national and the global orders is fated to defensive action.

As we broaden our agenda, the relevant questions remain: How do we mobilize the U.S. mainstream, a society conditioned to respond to sound bites of 60 seconds or less, without abandoning a comprehensive critique of power relations in society? Who are our allies in this task, and more strategically, who are our potential allies?

We should invite progressives of many sorts to new dialogue around multi-issue agendas for change in the U.S. We need to engage in dialogue not just with other outraged communities but with the dominant majority who at some level sincerely care about what kind of world they leave to their children. The challenge is how to make contact; to find the point of engagement where dialogue is possible.

### Greener Pastures

One opportunity for movement building exists within increasing U.S. concern over environmental issues. And before solidarity activists dismiss environmentalists as hopelessly apolitical they should consider that, just as there are two churches and two labor movements, there are also two environmental movements.

The current anti-toxics movement in the U.S. is a working class, multiracial force confronting corporate power and government complicity as a cutting edge movement. Many communities fighting toxics — from the West County Toxics Coalition in Richmond, California to the Gulf Coast Tenants Alliance in Louisiana — are already bridging the seemingly monumental gap between environmentalism — traditionally all-white — with movements for racial justice. Greens, socialist ecologists and others are developing synthetic agendas for radical change. With at least this one environmental movement, there are many opportunities for alliance. Already many progressive and radical environmentalists support the goals of the Central America movement and they want their issues to be supported in turn.

### Challenges for the Environmental Movement

Some in the U.S. left consider environmental activism a liberal distraction from issues of substance. This is partly correct. The dominant wing of U.S. environmentalism has created a number of large organizations, many of whom receive funding from ecologically destructive industries and necessarily define environmental issues narrowly and within the



interests of the U.S. elite. This mainstream is a movement of sorts, but at its heart it is reformist and willing, sometimes eager, to accommodate industry. These organizations have been unable to protect the environment as a whole. They're able to plug some of the leaks but the pressure behind the dam is mounting and a flood of environmental disasters is the inevitable product of the Northern economic agenda.

Capital is dexterously adept at playing a global shell game. Close a toxic dump in New Jersey, and the waste finds its way to Haiti or Guinea-Bissau. Pesticides banned for use in the U.S. are still produced here and exported to poor Southern countries where farm workers and ecosystems continue to be poisoned. Domestic plant closures — disasters for labor — go hand-in-hand with industrial relocation such as the development of *maquilladoras* in Mexico where labor laws and environmental regulations are lax. Yet the mainstream environmental movement does little to correct the impression that, once dolphins, whales and rainforests are saved, we can all breathe a sigh of relief and get back to business.

Finally, failure to stand with labor has been the Achilles heel of environmental activism. Playing on fears of unemployment, industries can use workers, even those endangered by toxic working conditions, to fight environmentalists for them, or alternately, lay-off workers and blame environmentalists. Lack of labor solidarity has hurt both workers and the environment. Labor and environment won't be an easy alliance, but it is essential to building an effective movement.

### Revolutionary Ecology

When victory comes to any Central American revolutionary movement, that future government will have to reckon with an ecological crisis so massive that development to meet even basic human needs may be nearly impossible. For this and other reasons, solidarity activists need to examine how environmental issues are, in fact, an integral part of many revolutionary popular agendas, especially in the South.

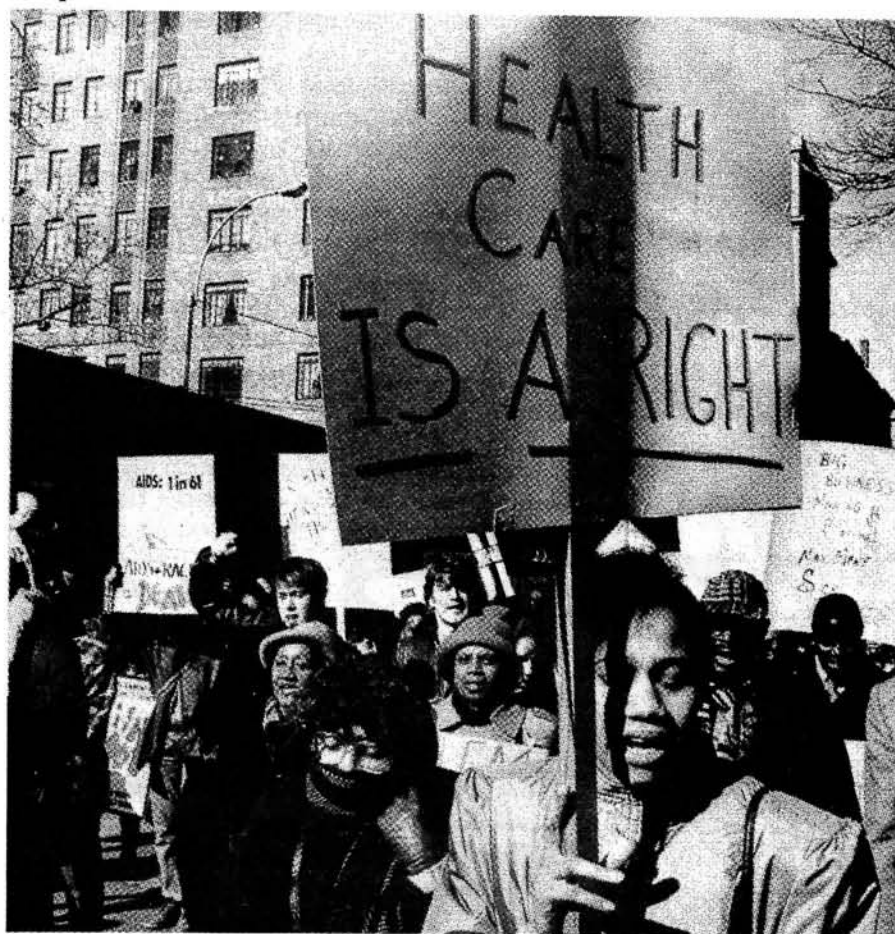
Agrarian societies who watched their well-being and independence deteriorate through foreign control and extraction of their natural resources know too well the connection between imperialism and environmental destruction. Export agriculture and monocropping has been at the root of deforestation, erosion, pesticide dependence and poisoning, and has transformed self-sufficient peasant populations into brutally exploited farm workers. In El Salvador, two percent of the people own 60 percent of the land. El Salvador is literally becoming a desert through superexploitation and counter-insurgency bombing that directly translate into severe malnutrition, drinking water contamination, and widespread dis-

placement for the vulnerable sectors of the population.

El Salvador has its "apolitical" environmentalists just like the U.S., but it also has a grassroots environmental movement. These members of the popular opposition advance their environmental vision as part of the larger movement for social change in El Salvador. As one Salvadoran ecologist recently explained, "The real problems relating to conservation in this country — and actually we are talking about restoration at this point—are all related to land tenure."

The industrial nations represent 20 percent of the global population, yet consume 80 percent of the Earth's resources, directly destroying the environment and inflicting enormous human suffering on the most vulnerable. So, despite the often shallow reformist environmental agenda of the U.S. mainstream, to truly challenge environmental destruction is to confront imperialism at its heart. And no revolutionary agenda can afford to be ignorant of the fragility of the ecosystems upon which any future society will depend for its survival and success.

As to the task of domestic movement building, engaging in dialogue with progressive and open-minded environmentalists remains an opportunity with enormous potential for drawing attention to the contradictions in U.S. policy. All environmental organizing should lead to a fundamental questioning of production and the issue of who owns and con-



trols land and resources. Some environmentalists don't seem to be capable of understanding environment beyond wilderness and endangered species, but a great number of more critical environmentalists don't buy the premises of green capitalism and are eager to make the connections with issues of militarism and social justice.

Due to differences in priorities, orientation and language, it may not be easy or immediately gratifying for the Central America movement and the environmental movement to enter into dialogue. Yet it is an important opportunity. The question many people new to environmentalism are asking is "What's

next after Earth Day?" It is our responsibility to take a key role in answering this question. If we don't contribute to setting the environmental agenda, capital certainly will have no such qualms and what may be a crucial opportunity will be lost. The environment may be an extremely active issue of the 90s. Without abandoning Central American struggles against U.S. domination, we can take this opportunity to build new alliances and widen public debate, posing questions that lead leftward from the ever-narrowing center. We may yet be a few years from the *Red Green Party* but such ideas are worthy of debate as we build a base for radical change in the U.S.

## Antonio Gonzales, International Indian Treaty Council

*Antonio Gonzales is a Seri Indian-Chicano. He is Information Director for the West Coast office of the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), the international diplomatic and political arm of the American Indian Movement and the first indigenous organization to hold non-governmental organization (NGO) status within the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.*

I don't think that the North American government's policies in Central America are going to change. We can expect an intensified assault on sovereign countries, albeit

more sophisticated. As Indian people we've always seen the United States' foreign policy, which is very condescending, very racist, very aggressive, as very similar to its national policy of how it deals with people of color here. The United States' treatment of American Indians is its Achilles heel to the outer world. The U.S. can't legitimately attack the human rights policies of other countries, whether they are totalitarian or not, because those countries can always come back and say, "what about the Indians?"

The effect of the sweeping changes in Europe and the Soviet Union has been to create a feeling of abandonment and disarray within the non-aligned movement, countries which were trying to establish

a new economic order. We have to understand these global changes to be more effective in supporting the struggles in Central America including Cuba, because they are becoming isolated and under attack. The invasion of Panama has to be looked at as a first stage of the new policy for Central America. The United States, now firmly implanted with its forces in Panama, is antagonizing the Sandinista forces that remain strong in Nicaragua; it will have an effect on the FMLN in El Salvador and on the liberation struggle in Guatemala. I think the United States is setting the stage for its new policy into the 21st century, and it includes destroying the progressive forces in Central America.

In Panama, during the administration of General Omar Torrijos and even after his death, Indian people — of which there are six indigenous nations — had been moving forward in self-determination, self-administration and getting back more of their land. Since the invasion, we're seeing a regression. An oligarchy is being reestablished and people are coming back to claim Indian lands which they say are theirs. The Kuna Indians have had their offices raided, their typewriters, copiers and other equipment confiscated, and many Kuna Indians in leadership positions have been arrested, interrogated and intimidated just short of torture.

The same can be said for Nicaragua. With the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas, the advances made by the Miskitos, the Sumus and the Ramas of the Bluefields area are being reversed. An elite class which was there before the revolution is now making its way back and is demanding its land back or just compensation.

Guatemala has suffered tremendously. Over 120,000 people have been killed in the last fifteen years and 80 percent of that population is Indian. It's controlled by a very dictatorial puppet government





that does not want to acknowledge Indian rights and is encouraged by the United States to defeat those Indians that are seeking to change that government structure. The same can be said even of Mexico. There are substantial Indian populations there and yet the Mexican government still practices some very harsh policies towards its own indigenous peoples.

Generally speaking, there's been a racist double standard toward Indian life by Europeans since 1492. These racist governments take their lead from the United States. If the United States' attitude towards the North American Indians would change, then we would begin to see a change within these other governments. But until that happens, they are going to maintain the same racist attitudes, the same policy of repression and suppression of indigenous people, because it emanates from the White House and it hasn't changed in over 200 years.

There are over 80 million Indians in the Americas and we cannot be denied any longer. Indigenous people have always contributed in cultural, spiritual, social and political ways, all integrated in one's way of living. We have seen governments rise and governments fall, revolutions come and revolutions go; but the Indian people have maintained a direction, practicing natural laws and natural teachings that all the other sacred colors of the world have been given at one time, and we have not deviated from that. All the two-legged beings, the last beings created on this Earth, were given the responsibility to maintain and care for the Earth, the trees and all the living things. For the most part, a lot of the other people have left that trail. Our time is coming closer when the world will look at Indian peoples once again as contributors to world ecological harmony, to try to re-instill values in people who have lost their way. And we are going to do this in the midst of revolutions and liberation struggles and in the midst of repression and suppression that has been the practice of settler governments since the coming of Europeans to this hemisphere.

We look to the support of North American soli-

darity groups to help change the attitudes of the United States and therefore to change the attitudes of dictatorial governments in Central and South America. A good example recently was the Veterans Peace Convoy which took about 30 trucks filled with humanitarian supplies to Managua in 1988. This group recently brought a convoy of over 50 trucks with over \$100,000 in humanitarian aid to the elders and the people resisting forced relocation at Big Mountain, Arizona. Hopefully, that type of activity will teach progressive groups in North America that they can re-focus and re-examine their role and maybe re-channel some of the energy that they were putting into Central America, and redirect it to an issue within this country.

Perhaps it takes a person like Nelson Mandela, a world giant, who acknowledged the struggle of Indians here in North America, to jar or re-awaken the consciousness of solidarity and progressive groups that there is a struggle here. That's not to discourage people here from looking towards South Africa, because they need our help. We need to continue economic sanctions and boycotts against South Africa. We're not saying don't help the Sandinistas, because they still need our help and moral support; the FMLN in El Salvador needs our support; the CUC (Comité Unidad Campesinos) and the EGP of Guatemala need our support; Cuba needs our support. But the challenge is to do the same thing at home.

Too many times Indian people have been denied our rightful place within progressive organizations and in decision making. Indian people have been talking about the environment and saving the redwoods and sacred sites and leaving the uranium in the ground for well over 100 years. Now it's taking on a popular note. We just hope that Indians are not put to the side by people thinking that John Muir invented ecology and the environmental movement. We want to work with environmentalists and other progressive groups here. We are here, we have always been here and we want to help.

## Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention

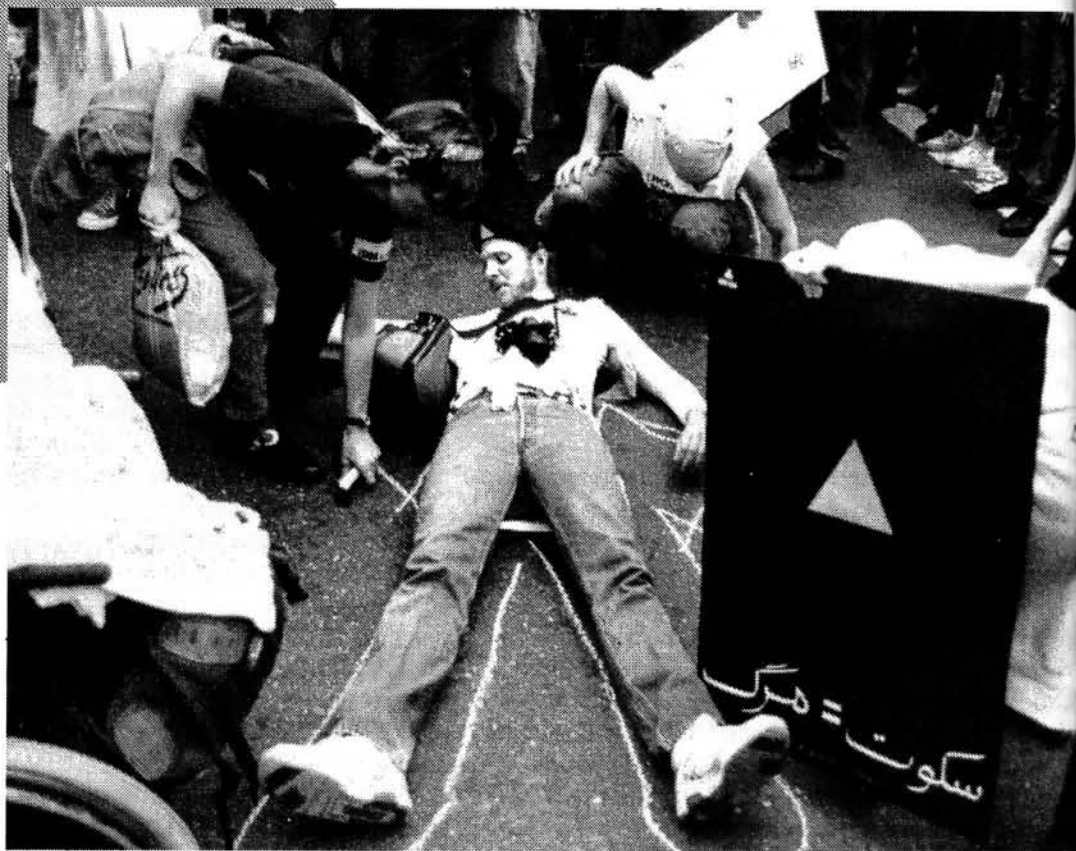
*LAGAI is a lesbian and gay liberation group that does work around Central and South America, Palestine, AIDS, and general lesbian and gay issues in the San Francisco Bay Area.*

The lesbian/gay liberation movement was born in the middle of the anti-imperialist struggles of the 1960s, specifically in the Black, Puerto Rican and

Chicano communities, and in opposition to the Vietnam war. In fact, the name Gay Liberation Front was patterned after the National Liberation Front of Vietnam.

The tradition of anti-imperialism has continued, and today groups like CISPES and the Pledge of Resistance are full of dykes and fags, at least in those cities where really blatant heterosexism has not kept





"Silence = Death," VI International AIDS Conference, San Francisco, 1990

us away. In addition, there are a number of independent lesbian and gay solidarity groups like LAGAI.

We see the two movements as linked for a number of reasons. Most lesbians and gay men, like most people in this world, are directly oppressed by imperialism, by u.s. client governments, by the international monetary fund, by the u.s. military. More broadly, as lesbians and gay men, our struggle for liberation challenges this entire exploitative and oppressive social system. Every institution in this society is our enemy, because they all combine to enforce our oppression. At this point in history, the nuclear family has killed more people than the nuclear bomb.

Yet despite these obvious links, and despite the fact that the lesbian and gay communities have certainly been present in the Central America solidarity movement (CASM), there remain serious problems in the way the CASM deals with our communities.

The first problem is the CASM's failure to acknowledge either the lesbian/gay movements, or the AIDS movement, as a part of the overall progressive agenda. We are often left out of laundry lists of

oppressed groups (a mixed blessing, we know). We find ourselves shoved to the back whenever attempts are made to outreach to trade unions or clergy (assuming that there are no gay union members, nuns, or priests, we suppose). It has been a constant struggle for us, in a city with over 150,000 gay people, to keep the CASM from scheduling major mobilizations that conflict with Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day.

At the same time, the Central America movement is noticeably missing from demonstrations focusing on AIDS or lesbian and gay issues. They want us to organize for mobilizations at the Concord Naval Weapons Station, yet are not there when we organize demonstrations against the Concord Traditional Values Coalition.

#### MONEY FOR AIDS, NOT FOR WAR

This is the big concession the anti-war movement makes to us — to chant this when they march through the Castro (a gay male neighborhood). The problem with war and with AIDS is that people are being killed by the government. The problem with war and with AIDS is that corporations profiteer off

death. The problem with AIDS and with war is *not* where "our" tax dollars go; the problem is the whole way the society is structured. If war was cheap, it still wouldn't be right, and if AIDS was cured, it still wouldn't be ok to spend money on war.

Now that the AIDS movement is getting larger, everyone wants ACT-UP's presence, and they don't even think that's not the same as including lesbians and gay men. Lesbians, who have been the backbone of CISPES and the Pledge for years, who have supported Nicaragua in every possible way, find ourselves once more rendered invisible.

### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The San Francisco arch-diocese, under the leadership of arch-homophobe Quinn, has declared war on lesbians and gay men. In the late 1970s gay groups were banned from meeting at the University of San Francisco, and a scheduled meeting was abruptly moved. Dignity, a group of lesbian and gay Catholics, was banned from meeting at any church in the arch-diocese. The arch-diocese led the successful fight against a domestic partners ordinance here.

Quinn knew Archbishop Romero, and finds himself forced to occasionally lend the church's participation to Central America events. Last March, less than six months after the domestic partners defeat, less than three months after a series of actions by lesbian, gay, AIDS, and abortion rights activists against the Catholic Church (the most famous of which was when ACT-UP NY took over St. Patrick's Cathedral), a major interfaith service commemorat-

ing the tenth anniversary of the assassination of Romero was held at St. Mary's, which is specifically Quinn's church.

We are aware of the role that "liberation theology" has played in the liberation struggles in Central America, and we are not opposed to working with organized groups of Catholics in the CASM. We are aware that many progressive Central Americans are practicing Catholics, and that the church is a major part of many cultures. We are also aware of the large numbers of lesbian and gay Central Americans who are oppressed by the institutionalized homophobia of the church. Scheduling this service to take place at St. Mary's enabled Quinn to (only temporarily) divide the movements from each other. How could we enter a church as supporters of the people of El Salvador, that we cannot enter as gay people? And how could "progressive" straight people go where lesbians and gay men are not welcome?

The CASM has, in general, failed to develop a base outside of the white straight middle class. The lesbian and gay community should be an easy reach for them because we are already there, whether they choose to see us or not.

Our experience in the CASM reinforces our decision to organize separately as lesbians and gay men, because we see how easily our issues are dumped when the middle class white straight "progressives" find something more interesting. By organizing separately, we are able to express our solidarity in our own ways, in ways that make us more visible and build our community and our liberation.

## Becky Mindich, Progressive Student Network

*Becky Mindich, an activist in the anti-intervention movement since 1984, works with the Progressive Student Network in Minneapolis.*

One of the movement's strengths has been the attempt by anti-intervention activists to meet conditions as they change in foreign policy. The emergency response network around El Salvador and Nicaragua was very impressive. The leaders of the movement have had an analysis that's fairly clear: that the era of Vietnam-style wars is drawing to a close and we're now in the era of low intensity conflict. The movement has made an impressive effort at mobilizing people to oppose U.S. war in Central America on many different fronts, not just when U.S. troops are directly involved, but also during legislative actions, Contra aid votes, appropriation bills, mobilizing around war legislation and death squad activity. The anti-intervention movement has done a good job at

keeping up the pressure, considering that one of the main purposes of low intensity conflict is to prevent unrest at home.

But I think the movement has had great difficulty in building a base outside of white petty bourgeois elements. There needs to be a lot more effort at organizing labor. The movement has missed opportunities to build links between anti-imperialist and anti-racist struggles. The anti-intervention movement needs to build a domestic component. We need to do more to build on the slogan of money for housing not for war. It should also go beyond slogans. People from the anti-intervention movement need to begin to work with people involved in domestic struggles for justice. The key sectors we need to focus on are labor, the religious left, and we need to build alliances with people involved in anti-racist struggle, "Rainbow" type politics. I would even say in that order.

Right now, the anti-intervention movement is in a state of crisis over the elections in Nicaragua. Although the core of the anti-intervention movement is able to assess the outcome of the elections, that analysis is not being put out to the rank and file of the movement. What has been happening is that the core of the anti-intervention movement is speaking too much to itself. The result is a shrinking in crowds coming to demonstrations. For instance, the March on Washington in March 1990 had extremely low numbers, much lower than projected. Attendance has been low at rallies across the U.S.

We are in danger of losing the religious left over Nicaragua and also, more importantly, the labor solidarity work has been hurt tremendously. We need an analysis that fights the defeated feeling that's being felt by a large number of people on the periphery of the movement. The crucial point is not letting the base of the movement slip away.

It's also an important time to not let factional differences erupt. The core of the movement must remain united. I think we need to prepare for another surge in El Salvador, probably this year. We need

to be in shape and ready to respond. We need to fight the U.S. distortion that the Nicaraguan election is a victory for democracy and also fight the defeatist line that it's the end of the Sandinistas.

We must also begin to build alliances with other anti-imperialist and anti-interventionist struggles that have remained on the periphery of the movement. The U.S. invasion of Panama was not mobilized around or opposed in any sustained form whatsoever. This dangerous lack of motion sends a clear signal to the U.S. government that the anti-intervention movement is still far too weak to really raise the social costs of U.S. intervention. We must broaden our analysis to include opposition to U.S. policy in the Philippines, Angola, Cuba, Palestine and Puerto Rico, to name but a few. It's time to close ranks and unite the advanced around an all-encompassing anti-imperialist and anti-racist consensus that protects the movement from divisions the ruling class imposes on us. We must use this analysis to win over the intermediate forces — the rank and file of the movement and keep our movement strong and growing in the 90s.

## Jean Hughes, 8th Day Center

*Jean Hughes is an Adrian Dominican sister who lived and worked in Latin America for 17 years, in the Black community on the south side of Chicago for 10 years and now works at 8th Day Center for Justice in Chicago, a coalition of religious communities of men and women who work in three areas: Economic Justice; Peace and Human Rights; Women-Church. Jean works particularly with the Peace and Human Rights group, especially with Central America solidarity.*

I think there were four major strengths of the movement around Central America which developed in the 80s:

1) The presence of Central Americans in Sanctuary telling their stories was compelling and reached a broader public than most progressive educational campaigns are able to do. They, the refugees, called for people of faith to act on what they say they believe about themselves and their world. They took people where they were and brought them along by appealing to the very best and deepest in them.

2) The messages repeated over and over again in the streets in a number of creative ways were simple, direct and touched a variety of people. It brought the discussion and, at the very least, the geography of

Central America into the home via the media.

3) It was possible to participate on many different levels and still feel not only connected but also integral to the movement.

4) It brought political progressives, the religious community and sensitive, concerned individuals (none of these are mutually exclusive) into working coalitions.

Religious communities for the most part are pretty law-abiding (for a number of historical reasons too lengthy to go into here). They are acculturated to understanding the laws of God, country, clan or family as necessary and helpful to organizing one's life and that of the society. Sanctuary was a radical challenge to "peaceful" lives. By deciding that U.S. intervention was immoral, choosing to take the public step of breaking a law for a greater good, and sharing life with refugee families, many in religious communities took an irreversible step. They and their communities are now different — most more radicalized, some painfully divided. Many have become an integral part of Third World solidarity.

I think there were some weaknesses:

1) The movement jumped from country to country — albeit, out of necessity — without sufficient education and outreach regarding a regional analysis. People were just getting the "No Contra Aid"



message when we jumped into El Salvador and wondered why people did not come right along with us. Contra aid was a clear, almost ideologically neutral concept. Support for the FMLN was more complex and needed more work to pull it off. Somebody was impatient.

2) The movement has been struggling with "Who sets the agenda" and "What are the priorities here in the United States." Much as I believe that the building up of alternative communities in El Salvador and Guatemala are vital to those countries' survival, I also believe that the U.S. government still has the power to determine the parameters of the revolutionary struggle for those — and other — struggles. The U.S. is able to intervene because it has the will and the resources. I believe our job is to undermine the will and redirect the resources. We live here. It's our tax dollars which do it. That is our responsibility. I think that people's top priority has to be how do we really change these structures so that we are not a foot on the neck of these Third World people. And Third World people can't do that. I can't sit in Acahualinca, Nicaragua and change the U.S. government. The people who live here can change this government.

3) The movement had great short-term tactics, but very fuzzy long-term goals and strategies. We are a nation of instant gratification, and if it's not over in a month, we're depressed. I mean, who ever heard of that? I think that what we can learn from the Central Americans is that, if we plan to make any real changes, we are in this for the long haul.

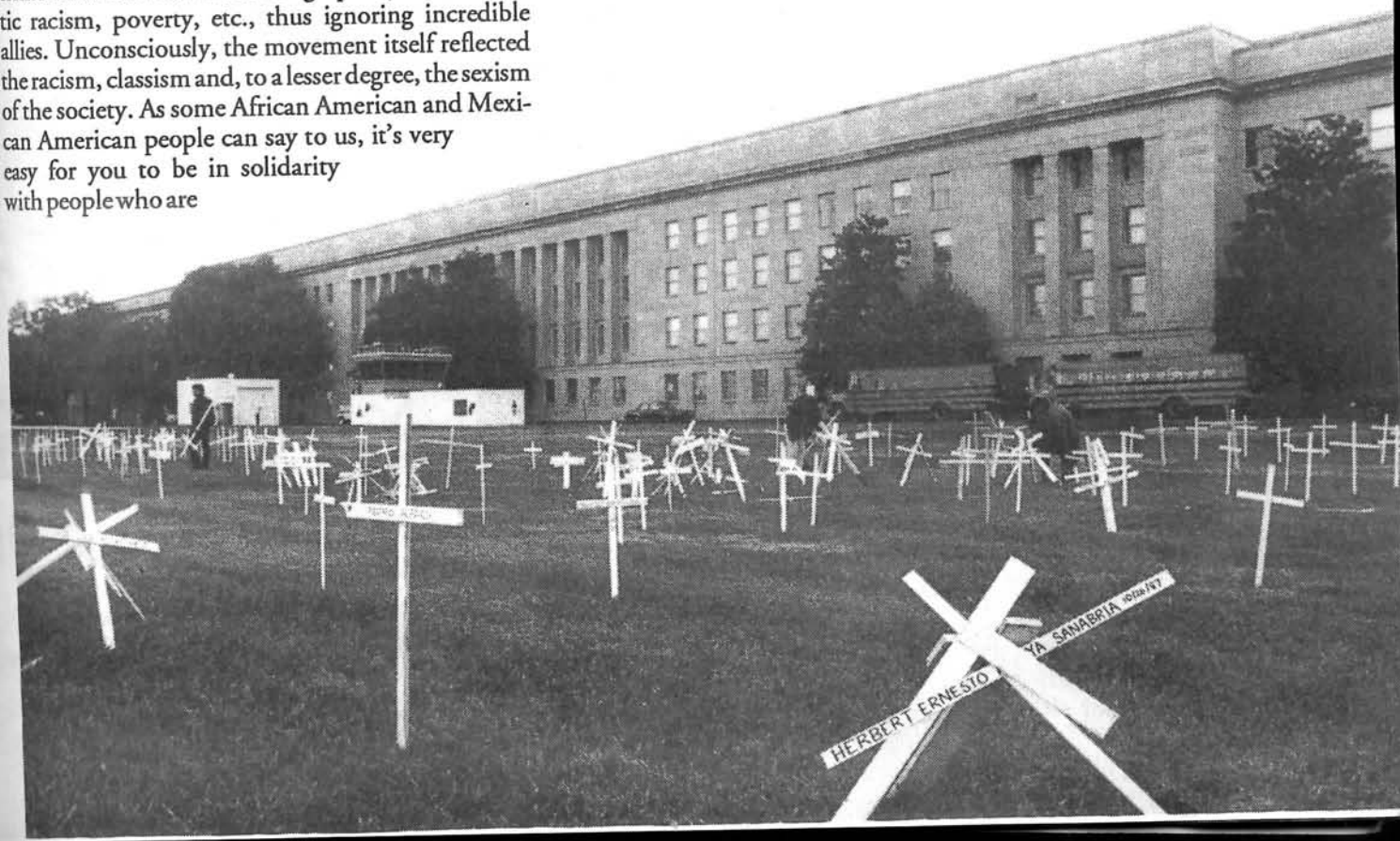
4) The movement failed to acknowledge the intrinsic link between U.S. foreign policy and domestic racism, poverty, etc., thus ignoring incredible allies. Unconsciously, the movement itself reflected the racism, classism and, to a lesser degree, the sexism of the society. As some African American and Mexican American people can say to us, it's very easy for you to be in solidarity with people who are

hundreds of miles away, but what about those of us who are right here and suffer the brunt of the system. I think we need to do some more linking of the issues and a little more sharing of the struggles of some of the people in our own country. Many individuals and groups did, in fact, bring to the coalitions in Chicago related issues, for example, the Campaign to End the Marion Lockdown, the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee's Anti-Racism Campaign, the Campaign to End the CHA Lockdown and ACT-UP. For the most part, they were responded to by individuals, but were never made integral to the analysis. Nor was there a consistent attempt to relate to progressive leadership and membership in minority communities.

In the next three years and beyond, I think we need to do long-term outreach and organizing. The deteriorating U.S. economy, the deindustrialization of the U.S., stimulates the government's need to intervene, but also creates out-of-work publics that are potential allies. We need broader coalitions, broader analysis, immediate response potential, visibility and long-term goals and strategies. Educational outreach needs to be planned by *good teachers*. Ideological purity alone does not build a movement. People listen to what touches them personally.

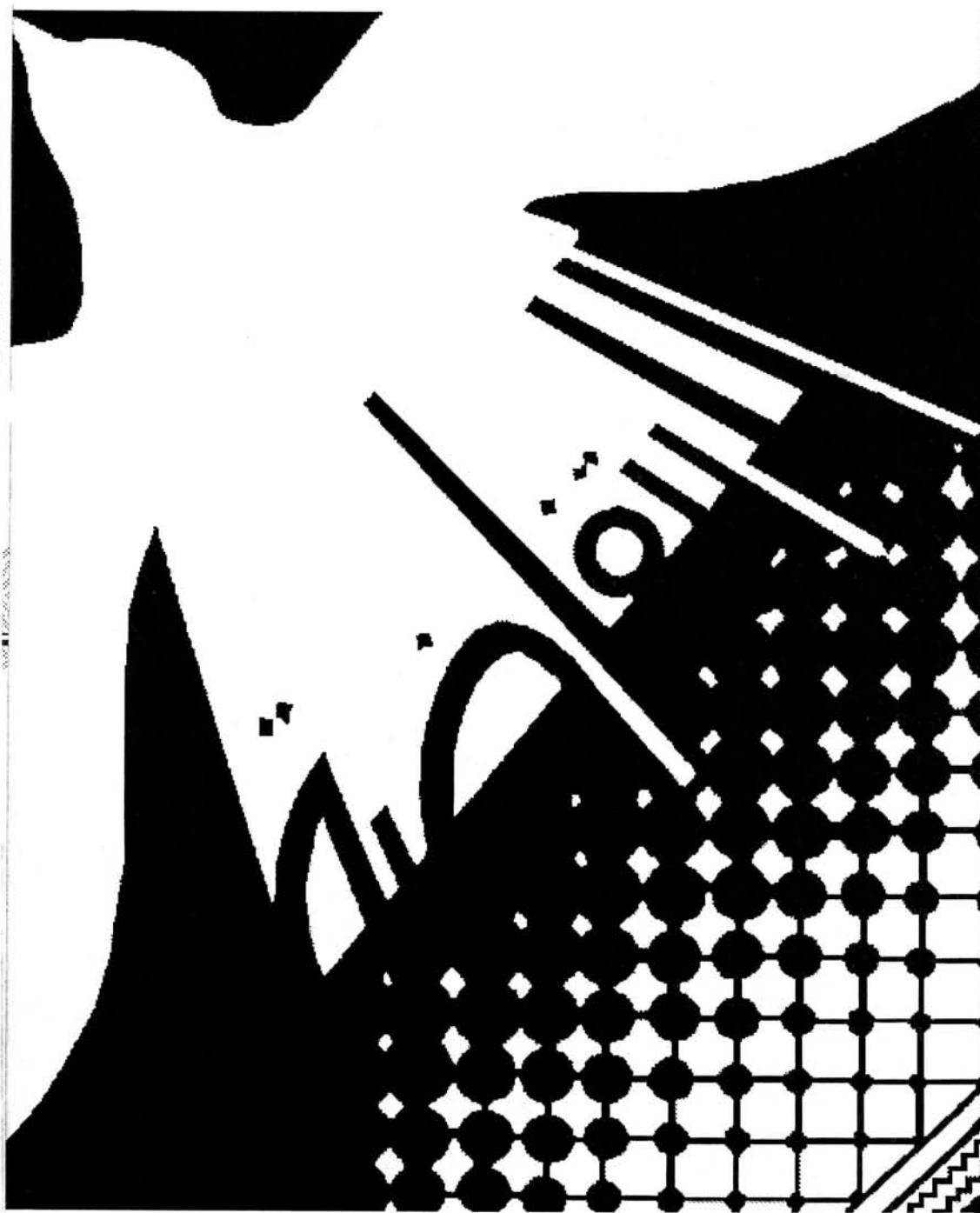
As a movement, our greatest enemies are (1) the need for instant gratification, and (2) boring programs with people lecturing at folks.

What gives me hope is the basic goodness of people and their need to be more than what materialism/consumerism can offer. □



# With Sto

PALESTINIAN W

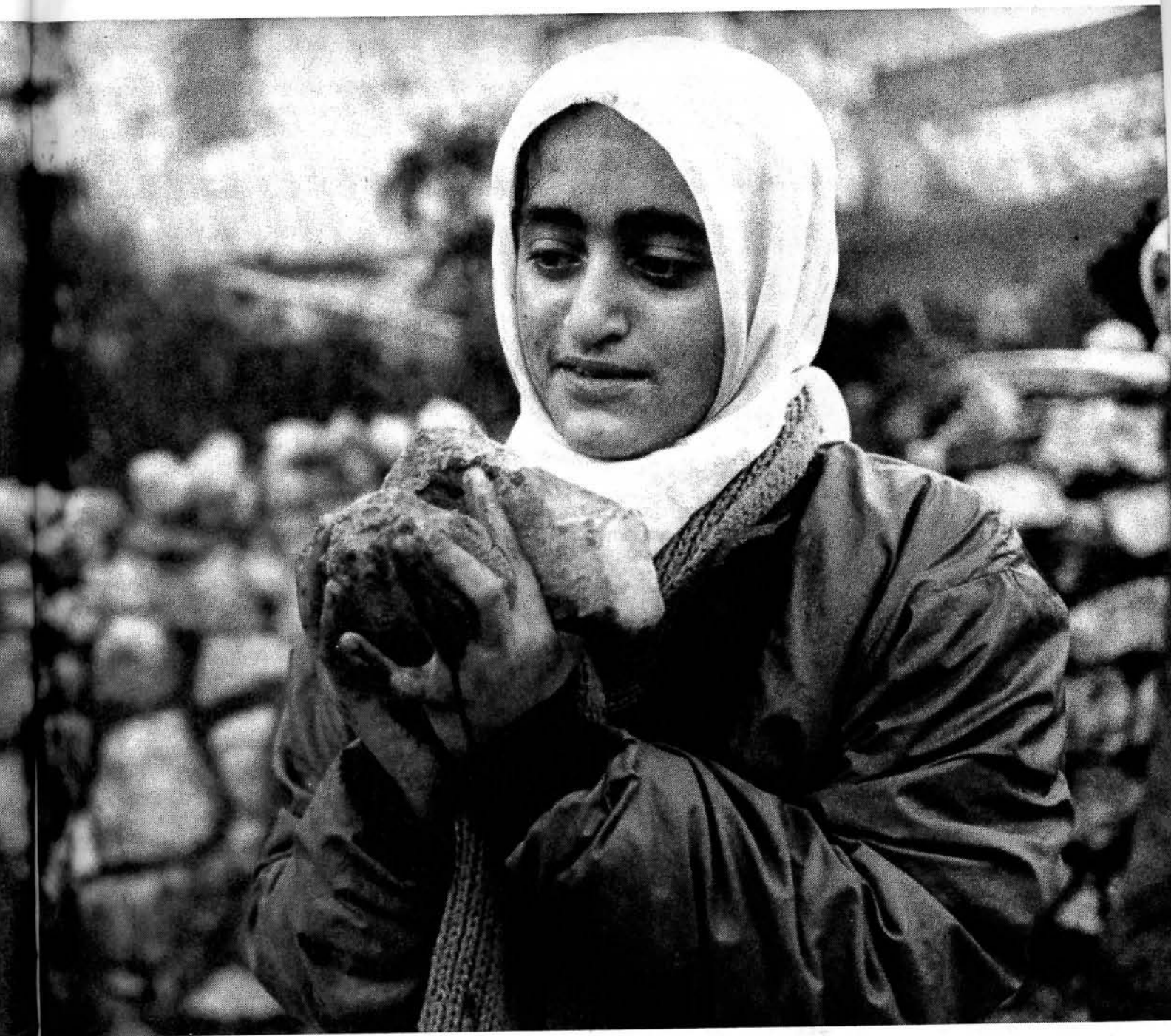


B Y M O N I C

**I**n January of 1990, I visited the West Bank as part of a delegation sponsored by the Cambridge Ramallah/El Bireh Sister City Campaign. The Campaign is building long-term people-to-people relationships by linking local kindergartens, unions, women's

# ones and Honor

## WOMEN AND THE INTIFADA



QUE VAN GIGCH

organizations and community groups with their Palestinian counterparts in Ramallah/El Bireh.

Since my visit, events in the Occupied Territories — the slaughter of seven Gazan workers in May, massive protests throughout Gaza and the West

Bank, their spread to Arab territories within the pre-1967 borders of Israel and to Jordan, and brutal repression by the Israeli army — have given the lie to U.S., Israeli and media representations that the Palestinian *Intifada* was waning. Now more than



ever it is vital to build a movement in the U.S. which can stop continued U.S. aid to Israel and which will support the Uprising. Part of that effort involves understanding how the *Intifada* is reshaping Palestinian community life and building new progressive models for Palestinian society. Israel Shahak, a strong supporter of Palestinian human rights, has said:

People outside Palestine are not enough aware that the *Intifada* was not only a successful revolt against the Israeli authorities. It was also a successful social revolution against the forms of Palestinian society. This combination gives it strength. Had it been only a political revolt it would by now have collapsed.<sup>1</sup>

Over the course of my two-week visit, I was struck by the strong presence and leadership of women in the *Intifada* and the changes this seemed to reflect in traditional Palestinian cultural roles. My observations are specific to the West Bank, as Gaza has a slightly different political and social history under occupation. When I returned, I found that the observations and analyses of others confirmed my impressions. (A list of additional readings is included at the end of this article.)

### "WOMEN'S HONOR"

Historically, a traditional patriarchal family structure and social attitudes limited Palestinian women's role outside the home and family. The father was economically and socially responsible for the family. He held the position of authority and honor. A woman's position was subordinate within this structure, and social attitudes valued men differently than women.

Another aspect of traditional values which affected the social and family position of Palestinian women was the concept of women's honor, as defined by strict sexual mores, probably originating from both Moslem and Christian religious traditions. These mores limited social contact between an unmarried woman and men outside her immediate family to ensure that no illicit sexual contact could occur. Even the perception of contact had to be avoided because mere rumors could ruin a woman's reputation. If a woman lost her sexual "honor" in the eyes of the community, then so did her family. Therefore, family members, particularly fathers and brothers, would enforce limitations on women's independence to safeguard the family "honor."

Despite the Israeli claim to a more "liberated" view of women, the occupying forces exploit this

code of values surrounding women as a method to control women's activism. An activist from a Gaza women's committee gave an example of how the Israelis use this strategy:

Sometimes the [Israeli] intelligence officer has stopped me when I'm in the street and called me over in a place where there are a lot of people so the whole street can see what's going on — acts all friendly and smiles as if we're old friends. The effect this is supposed to have is that people will think I'm a collaborator and it reflects on my reputation because I'm talking to a man. Of course I don't talk to them, but they play upon the vulnerability of a woman in our society.<sup>2</sup>

Under the conditions of Israeli occupation, economic hardship has greatly increased the necessity for women to work outside the home. Men have found it more difficult to find work, or their income may be insufficient to support a family. Since the early 1970s, it is common for women to have outside jobs — especially in the cities and towns. A woman with an independent source of income, who helps support her husband, father and brothers, gains tremendous authority, independence and honor in the eyes of her family. Additionally, when women work outside, the social attitudes about contact between the sexes are, of necessity, challenged because women must deal with men in their workplaces.

Despite these changes, the strength of the family patriarchal structure and traditions varies between the towns, refugee camps, and villages, and also between Moslem and Christian communities. In villages and strongly Moslem areas, the norms are more conservative. Young women must confront these norms to be able to participate in the struggle to change women's social status. In the West Bank Moslem village of Beita, a kindergarten teacher went on a hunger strike when she was young to force her parents to give her more freedoms, such as going to school, and she also refused an arranged marriage with someone she didn't care for.

In one host family, two unmarried daughters in their late 20s and early 30s still lived with their parents in Kadura refugee camp. One daughter wanted to live alone but didn't because it would be considered scandalous. Ironically, by living with their parents, these daughters were freed from household and childrearing duties giving them more freedom and time to do political work and take jobs outside the home. Of course, obtaining this freedom depends on the needs of a particular family — eldest daughters are often needed to care for younger siblings — and on the attitudes of the family.

### WOMEN CONFRONT THE OCCUPATION

In the context of Palestinian national struggle, women have also challenged traditional norms. As

*Monique van Gigch has been an activist for women's liberation, and in solidarity with Puerto Rican independence and the Palestinian struggle. She has also completed some projects and performances to integrate theater and dance with political organizing.*

early as the 1920s, Palestinian women took political actions in response to the conditions of colonialism. Women participated in the historic 1936 strike protesting British colonial control of Palestine and Zionist settlement which was already forcing Palestinians off their land. In the 1960s, women in urban areas organized centers for helping those in need and providing vocational training for women. In the 1970s, a more politicized movement of young women formed women's committees which sought to organize women on a grassroots level, including in the camps and villages, particularly building nationalist consciousness.

In the two and a half years of the Palestinian Uprising, the concept of women's and family honor has been challenged more strongly than ever before and continues to be transformed and redefined. The form of struggle of the *Intifada* itself is a key impetus to these changes.

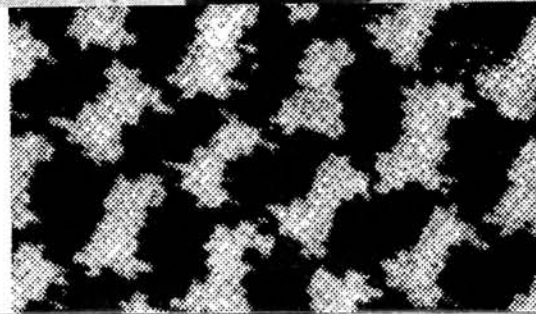
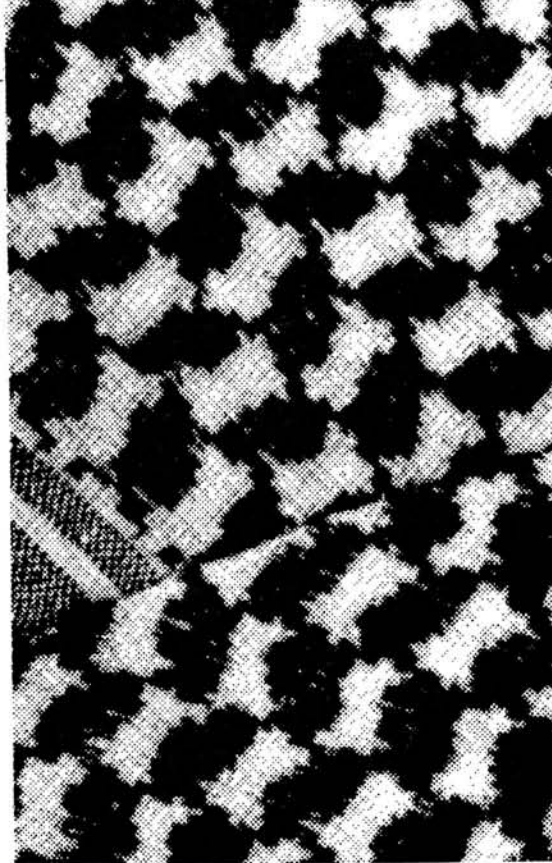
Mass insurgency and collective defiance in the context of a popular revolt have become the new cornerstones of political action, a change from the previous emphasis on armed struggle, shuttle diplomacy and limited mass action.<sup>3</sup>

During the *Intifada*, there has been a development of grassroots and neighborhood committees, a partial shift in the locus of authority from formal institutions to these committees and to the streets, and a shift from urban-centered activity to the camps and villages. These shifts have occurred for many reasons including the Israeli crack-down on the existing community and political organizations and the greater isolation and repression suffered by the camps and villages.

As a result, the barriers between the world of home and the world of politics seem to have become permeable. Women have transformed their family responsibilities to encompass the entire community in various ways. Neighborhood committees, usually led by women, organize community support for families in need (families of prisoners and martyrs), smuggle food during curfews, and organize and run sewing and agricultural cooperatives. In August 1988 the Israeli authorities declared the neighborhood committees illegal as a threat to the occupation. However, this banning has not deterred the women from their activities.

On the streets women physically intervene when soldiers try to beat or arrest men or youth. Women help build barricades to deter soldiers from invading their neighborhoods. Women protect men when they go out by accompanying them, especially during curfews or at night. Israeli soldiers still perceive and treat women as less of a threat than men. This perception has provided the space for women to participate in actions such as the transfer of information or leaflets when it is less safe for men to be involved in such activities.

Since the *Intifada*, acceptance of women's initiatives has accelerated. Survival also dictates a changing attitude towards the activism of women. Hanan Mikhail-





Ashrawi, Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Bir Zeit University in Ramallah, said this about women's participation in the *Intifada*:

Women did not sit back and ask the men to grant them freedom and equality; women in the *Intifada* went out and actually did things. They confronted the army. They built barricades. They threw stones. They helped prevent the arrest of men. They took on-the-spot decisions. As a result, it's very difficult for a man to challenge a woman and say no, you can't do this, because she's already done it.<sup>4</sup>

Although the young woman from my host family honored the expectation that she live at home, she was willing to tackle traditional family and community attitudes in other ways. She was an active organizer for a women's committee, and took on many responsibilities for this committee: organizing a day care center, organizing women's demonstrations against Israeli occupation, and guiding Europeans and Americans on tours in the West Bank. Once, one of her brothers beat up her and her sister for going out at night to a meeting, claiming the women were bringing scandal on themselves and

dishonoring the family. As a result of this battering, a family conclave was called with aunts, uncles, parents and all the siblings. After a fierce discussion and argument, the family commended the women for the work they were doing and ostracized the brother.

Similar incidents of family confrontation over women's active role in political life were described to me by other young women as well. One woman, a student activist and human rights field worker (documenting human rights abuses), was jailed several times. After her first arrest before the start of the *Intifada*, her family blamed her for the arrest and said they wouldn't tolerate having a daughter in prison because she was "dishonoring" the family. Later she was arrested again, without charges, and suffered severe health problems in prison without getting proper medical treatment. At that point, her parents participated in campaigns to get her released and her mother joined other women in demonstrations, risking arrest and prison herself.

Mothers described to me their daughters' activism, imprisonment, and bravery with great pride,





tempered only by anxiety for the potential next imprisonment.

These stories reflect how a new concept of women's honor and family honor is being formed, especially as more Palestinian women are imprisoned. Women are taking initiatives and risks on behalf of their families, communities, and nation, and are refusing to allow tradition to undermine their contributions.

### "CREEPING TRANSFER"

At the same time as Palestinian women are transforming family roles into collective forms of community struggle, the Israeli authorities have targeted families, particularly women and children, for punishment. One insidious policy is that of the "creeping transfer" — expulsions of mostly women and children from the West Bank. The Israelis conduct middle-of-the-night raids on families and dump women and children who are without papers over the border in Jordan without notice. The Israelis claim that these expulsions are not political attacks, that they are merely enforcing residency laws. However, the policies amount to a policy of transfer, aimed at depopulating the West Bank of Palestinians.

One couple described to me how when they got married they applied to the Israeli authorities for residency papers for the woman, who is a Palestinian from Jordan (whose family was forced to Jordan by Israeli settlement after 1948). When the woman was denied the "family reunification papers," they inquired about the reason for the denial. The Israeli authorities explained that she didn't fit their criterion of being either useful to the Israelis or needing acceptance on humanitarian grounds.

Once denied a "family reunification" permit, women face the choice of leaving the West Bank for a year before reapplying, or the entire family can leave together (and the man risks losing his residency status), or the woman can choose to live illegally in the West Bank and face the high risk of discovery and immediate expulsion. The children of women without legal residency are also considered illegal. Al-Haq (a Palestinian human rights organization) documented that in the six months from July through December 1989, almost 100 families from the Ramallah area alone were expelled from their homes to Jordan under this policy. In January 1990, under pressure from Palestinians and the international human rights community, then-Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin announced a "freeze" on transfers of families.

Other forms of collective punishment also target families. Demolition and sealing of houses of families with a member imprisoned for participation in the *Intifada* is a particularly brutal example. Curfews on entire villages, towns or camps, which can last from one to more than forty days is another attempt to undermine community solidarity. The Israelis obviously intend by these collective punishments to

force families and communities to pressure their members to stop the *Intifada*. However, their tactics only serve to enrage the Palestinians further, to entrench their hatred of occupation, and strengthen their solidarity with those suffering the collective punishment.

Despite the ongoing hardships and repression faced by every Palestinian in the Occupied Territories, the *Intifada* has brought concrete social gains, including a significant increase in the democratization of roles in the family, particularly for women. In turn, these accelerated social struggles are transforming old restrictive traditions and helping to sustain the Uprising for an independent Palestine.

I am reminded of the 94-year old father in my host family in Kadura refugee camp. He began his fight against colonialism in Palestine in 1939 against the British. He expressed to me his pride for the youth who fight in the *Intifada* and his hopes that they may live to see the end of occupation. His daughters now carry forward the struggle for Palestine with the same vigor and spirit their father once had. They embody their father's knowledge and love of the Palestinian land as well as the modern ideas and skills of activist women in the *Intifada*. □

### Additional Resources

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### Notes

1. Israel Shahak Interviewed by H. Aram Veaser and Marilyn Jerry, *Z Magazine*, March 1990, p. 97.
2. Isobel McConnan, "The Double Challenge Facing Gazan Women," *Middle East International*, December 19, 1987, pp. 19-20.
3. Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson, "Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers" in *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation*, Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, eds. (South End Press, 1989), p. 157.
4. Interview with Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi, *New Outlook*, June/July 1989, p. 8.

# "An extremely socialist way

# of becoming capitalist."

*The Soviet New Left  
Critiques Perestroika*

*Interview with*

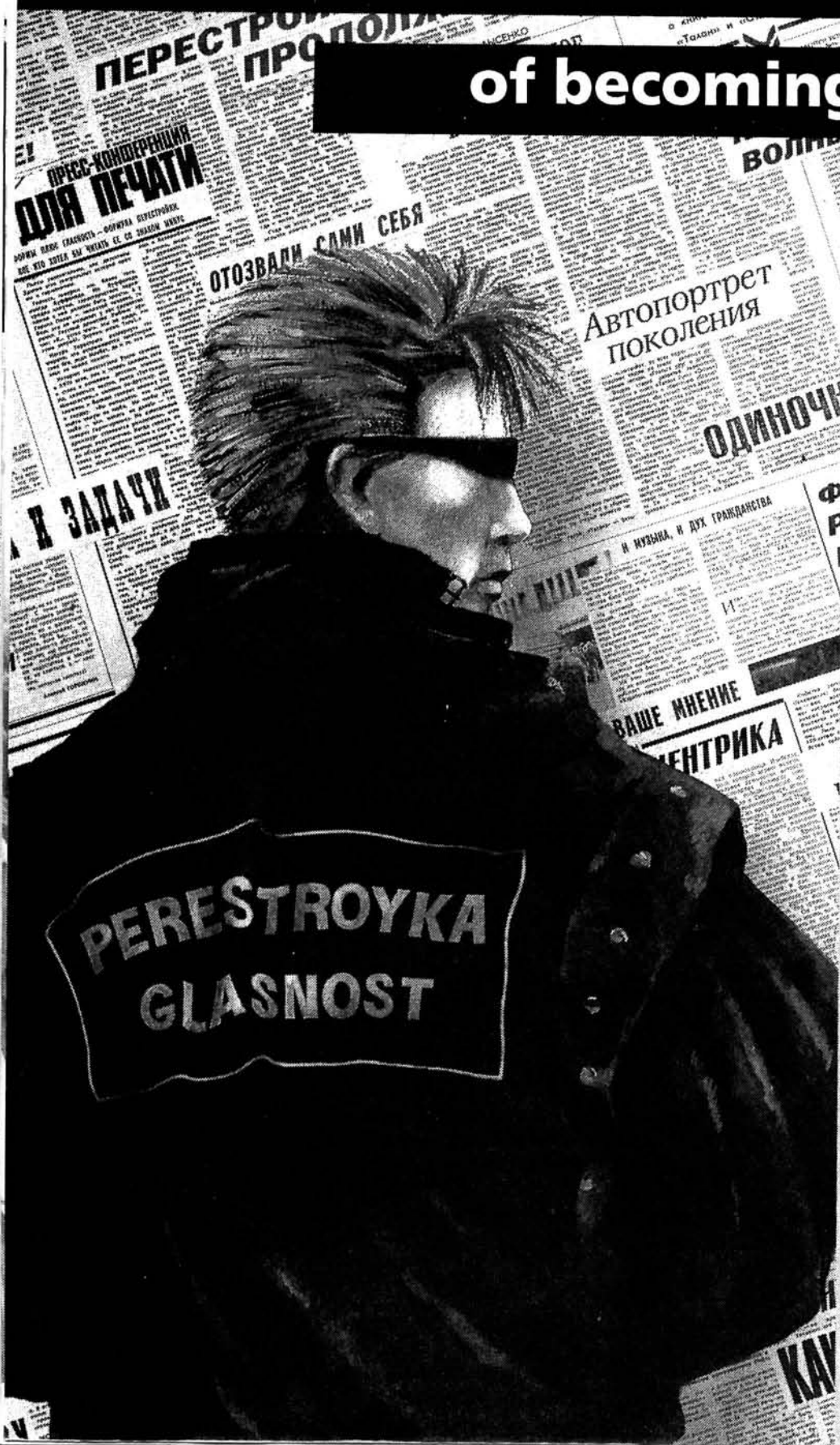
*Boris Kagarlitsky*

*Boris Kagarlitsky is a leading figure in the Soviet New Left. The author of many articles and books including *The Thinking Reed* and *The Dialectic of Change* published by Verso Press, Kagarlitsky has been associated with the Club of Social Initiatives, the Federation of Socialist Clubs, and is currently a member of the Organizing Committee for the All-Russian Socialist Party. When Breakthrough interviewed him in March of 1990, he had just been elected to a seat on the Moscow City Council.*

*Breakthrough: How do you assess the state of perestroika? Where is it leading?*

**Boris Kagarlitsky:** What we are getting is an extremely socialist way of becoming capitalist. The top management of enterprises and party bosses are buying shares from the state companies while the state guarantees their inefficient management from bankruptcy. On the other hand, the profits stay in private hands. But this capitalist socialism for managers won't become socialism for labor. Because, according to the management, the workers

"Blind People" by Nikolai Zhuk, 1988 — This poster contrasts the popularity of Western fashion with the new look of Soviet newspapers under Glasnost.





are lazy, they don't work hard, they don't respect their bosses — a very important point. And their solution is quite evident, unemployment. Some very prominent economists are talking about which level of unemployment they should create. You can read in one of the most popular intellectual journals that we need no less than 13 million unemployed in the Soviet Union. It's not even the Polish case where they say if things don't turn out the best, we could have a million and half unemployed. Soviet economists are saying, "We desperately need to have unemployment." So imagine how the working people react to that. I shouldn't say they're very happy.

*Reforms in the Soviet Union, particularly the introduction of market forces, have stirred up quite a debate in the left here, as well as in your country. I'm wondering how you see these proposals?*

Well, some degree of market development is necessary because we still have commodity relations and in the modern global economy we have to have some market structures. But which structures? How could they operate? Should they be expanded or limited? Should they dictate to us how and where to invest money or should we first think about socially necessary investment and then think about making these socially necessary investments more rational from the point of view of the existing market conditions?

We are facing all the problems which are typical for most modern societies, which are in some way present in this country and in many other countries. These problems cannot be solved by the market, because they are not solved by the market here.

Our priorities for new social investment have to include ecological development, infrastructure development, research and development, education, health care, humanization of technologies, and becoming smaller. For many years the tendency of development in Russia — not just the Soviet Union, but in Czarist Russia — was "big is beautiful." With a centralist system, but even under capitalism, the tendency was to build big. That is one of the reasons for our ecological disasters. And these things can't be left to the market.

*How does the New Left envision socialism in the Soviet Union?*

We don't use the term "socialism"; we use the term "socialist project." The society which existed before was simply not socialist. But how will society look after really becoming socialist? We cannot say, because we think that socialism can be achieved only as a result of some kind of global process of change. So we have a socialist project which outlines some structures of a socialist nature which we want to build in our country and which can become part of a mechanism of a socialist society when it develops later on a regional or international level.

*What do you mean by a global process of change?*

The world market and the world division of labor are now capitalist. Without any real change on this scale, it's utopian to think about socialism in one country. We think the countries which are acquiring some kind of socialist structure must also become important factors for global change. And that is why we are interested in direct links to Third World movements and with Third World countries. Together we can probably create new pressures for global change, for a new division of labor, some global democratic regulation, which is designed to change the nature of center/periphery relations as they exist now. On the ecological level, global democratic regulation is already becoming an international necessity.

*How would you deal with state ownership?*

State ownership is important for two reasons: to get money for social programs by transferring earnings from the state sector to the so-called "unproductive sphere" — health care, education and so forth — and to redistribute not just the wealth, but the resources, to concentrate the resources for an investment strategy reflecting the needs of the society in general.

One problem with state ownership in the past was that the management of the state property was undemocratic. Although the traditional explanation was that state property must serve the need of the nation, the fact is that the nation had absolutely no access to the controlling bodies. The majority of the people were quite alienated and had no chance to say anything about those enterprises which formally belonged to them. It wasn't the property of the nation, but the property of the state bureaucracy.

We think there should be a mechanism of democratic control of enterprises and projects which really are important for the nation, for its long term development. They should be owned by the state but controlled by democratic bodies with public decision making. The same is true of investment policies.

*How do you see socialist democracy operating at the basic levels of society?*

Well, the idea of self-management was and remains the core idea of the socialist project in Eastern Europe. It was the slogan of Solidarity in 1980; that was also, by the way, one of the slogans of the Prague Spring. Of course, self-management at the enterprise level cannot automatically solve the problem. It is no panacea. As an isolated phenomenon, self-management can be incorporated into Stalinist regimes, corrupted and destroyed, becoming extremely inefficient and senseless as happened in Yugoslavia. Complete self-management also is not possible because if you speak only about worker's democracy it could become quite anti-ecological and anti-consumer and in some way even anti-democratic, because



the interests of the labor collectives do not necessarily coincide with the interests of the community as a whole. But without self-management you will have no real participation of the people on the lowest level in the democratic processes.

*What about private property?*

Although we are not in favor of private property, we don't support any kind of administrative suppression of private property either. In the past, this has produced a lot of negative effects. But we are against privatization of the state sector. If somebody has money and wants to invest in something productive, creating jobs, producing goods, etc. — of course, within the framework of law — this could and should be allowed. The main problem is that now with the erosion of the state sector, private money is not going into the production or creation of new jobs or establishment of new enterprises. It's just going into speculation, into buying shares of state enterprises, into creating a new class of shareholders, who do nothing but invest in the state enterprises and live off their dividends. That is really counterproductive.

*Perhaps one of the most difficult issues for us to understand is the national question in the Soviet Union.*

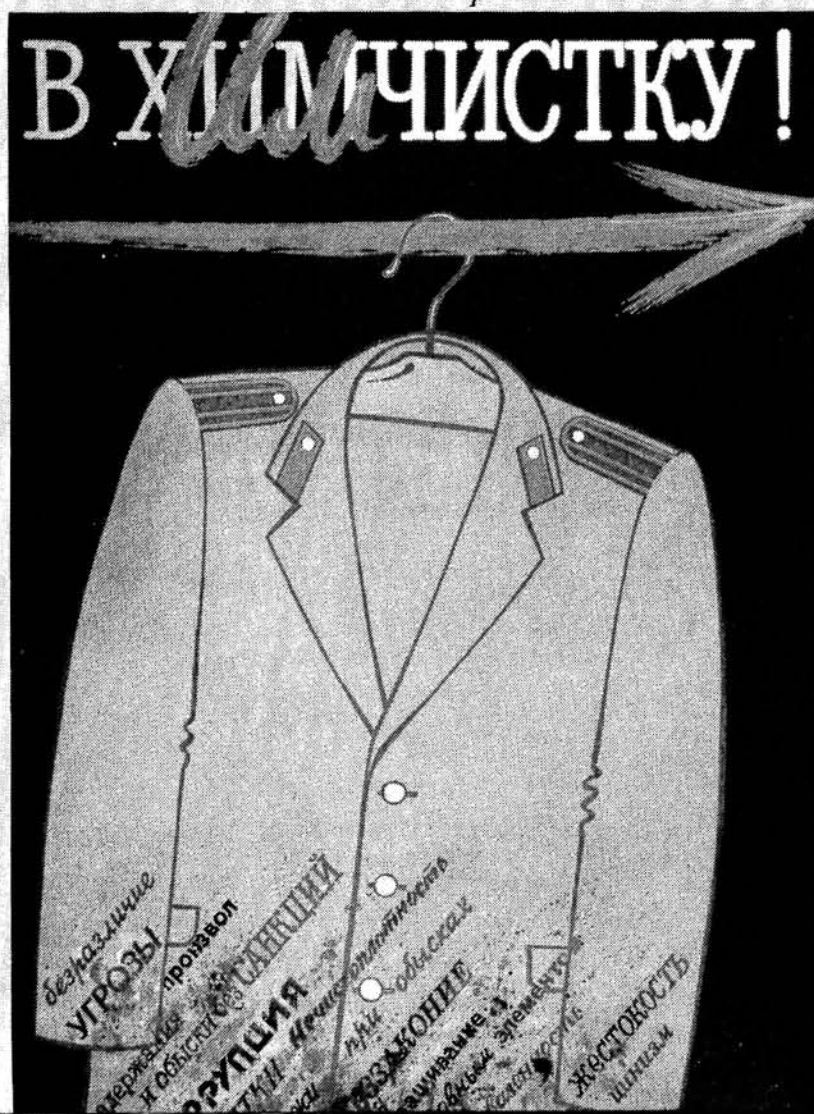
*What are your thoughts on this?*

The paradox of the current situation is that the republics cannot coexist within the Soviet Union. But, on the other hand, economically and even socially they cannot exist separately. The economies of those republics are very tied to each other and they cannot find alternative markets. In addition, all those republics need an enormous effort to modernize their economies. Of course, it would be better if some kind of regional program or regional coordination existed, because it would be cheaper and more efficient and faster. So they need each other. On the other hand, there is such a bad experience of coexistence and of imperial domination that they need to be independent.

We support the right of these nations to self-determination, without preconditions, which means we also support minorities inside of these nations. The main problem we face as the left is not the problem of Lithuania or Georgia which want to leave the Soviet Union. It's clear they want to leave; they have a majority for independence; they were incorporated into the Soviet Union, well, not very voluntarily.

The question for us is different. For example, the Georgians want to leave, but they have their own minorities. In many cases, local elites which are demanding their self-determination are rejecting the right of self-determination for their own minorities. In the Georgian case it's terrible, because they reject the right of these minorities even to have any cultural autonomy. They are trying to "Georgify" their minorities. In Lithuania, the Polish minority is sometimes denied its right to autonomy. So we say we will support Lithuania in its struggle for independence, but we will also support the Polish minority in its struggle for minority rights, regional autonomy and cultural rights. And that, of course, makes our position sometimes difficult.

I think the creation of independent nation states is an inevitable and important step; but it won't solve the problems of those nations. Later they will probably move once again closer together. We also support the idea of secession for another reason. Now national movements are overshadowing the social conflicts. But after they get their formal independence, all the typical social conflicts will emerge, the united fronts for independence will split and there will be a possibility for a new unity on a different basis, in traditional Marxist terms, on a class basis or on the basis of social solidarity of different nationalities.



Poster at left: "In need of a clean!," Alexander Zuenko, 1988 — A policeman's uniform stained by 'arbitrariness, corruption, lawlessness, and cruelty.'





*How do you analyze the victory by the conservative alliance over the Social Democrats and Communists in the elections in East Germany?*

In the Eastern Bloc countries, including Poland and Hungary, there was a feeling that now the great hour of Social Democracy had arrived. So, why have the Social Democrats done so badly? Social Democracy promised capitalism, but with a human face. Well, if you can't have socialism with a human face, let us have capitalism with a human face. They said, "We'll have everything like in Sweden: efficient private enterprise, openness to the world market, and social guarantees, social welfare, free education, free health care, cheap housing, cheap transport, but on a capitalist basis, of course." But people are not so stupid. They think "Great, I'd like something like that, but first of all we need capitalism to achieve all these miracles. Social Democrats are for capitalism, but the other guys are even more capitalist. Let us support those guys. Let us vote for liberals, or the conservatives, or the extreme right wing, the Republicans in the German case, but for somebody who is more honestly capitalist." One of the greatest successes of Social Democrats in Eastern Bloc countries was that they managed to persuade a lot of people that capitalism is better than socialism and persuaded them to vote for the anti-Social Democratic parties. So they got what they deserved.

*Don't you think the reunification of Germany will have an invigorating effect on capitalism?*

I don't think so. I don't think that it is a very good thing for West Germany to swallow East Germany in the sense that the piece could be too big. In this case, West Germany pays an enormous cost with more inflation, with monetary union, additional investment which also draws resources from other investment priorities, a lot of pressure on the West German workers because East German workers could accept lower wages. But that could, on the other hand, produce greater pressures for more solidarity among the workers and more militancy within the unions to defend their level of wages and so on. I just cannot expect the West to swallow all of Eastern Europe, because there are no resources available in the West. It's a gigantic piece.

*One issue of great concern to us in the U.S. is the fate of national liberation struggles and developing countries which are trying to build socialism. Do you think internationalism is now or has ever been a real principle*

*in practice? What should Soviet policy be, for example, toward Cuba?*

The official Soviet position on the national liberation movements was, for a long time, that they wanted to contribute to help them. But there was a political price which national liberation movements had to pay; and the price was that they were somehow pressed to adopt the Soviet model. I think this price was, in fact, enormous. Now that the official line of the Soviet Union is becoming some kind of withdrawal of support from the national liberation struggles, it also has two sides. On the one hand, it is very bad for the national liberation movements because they are not getting their supplies. On the other hand, it may not be so bad for the leaders of the national liberation movements to think once again about the model they were about to adopt or in many cases adopted and to think about the nature of the system which helped them before and is now betraying them.

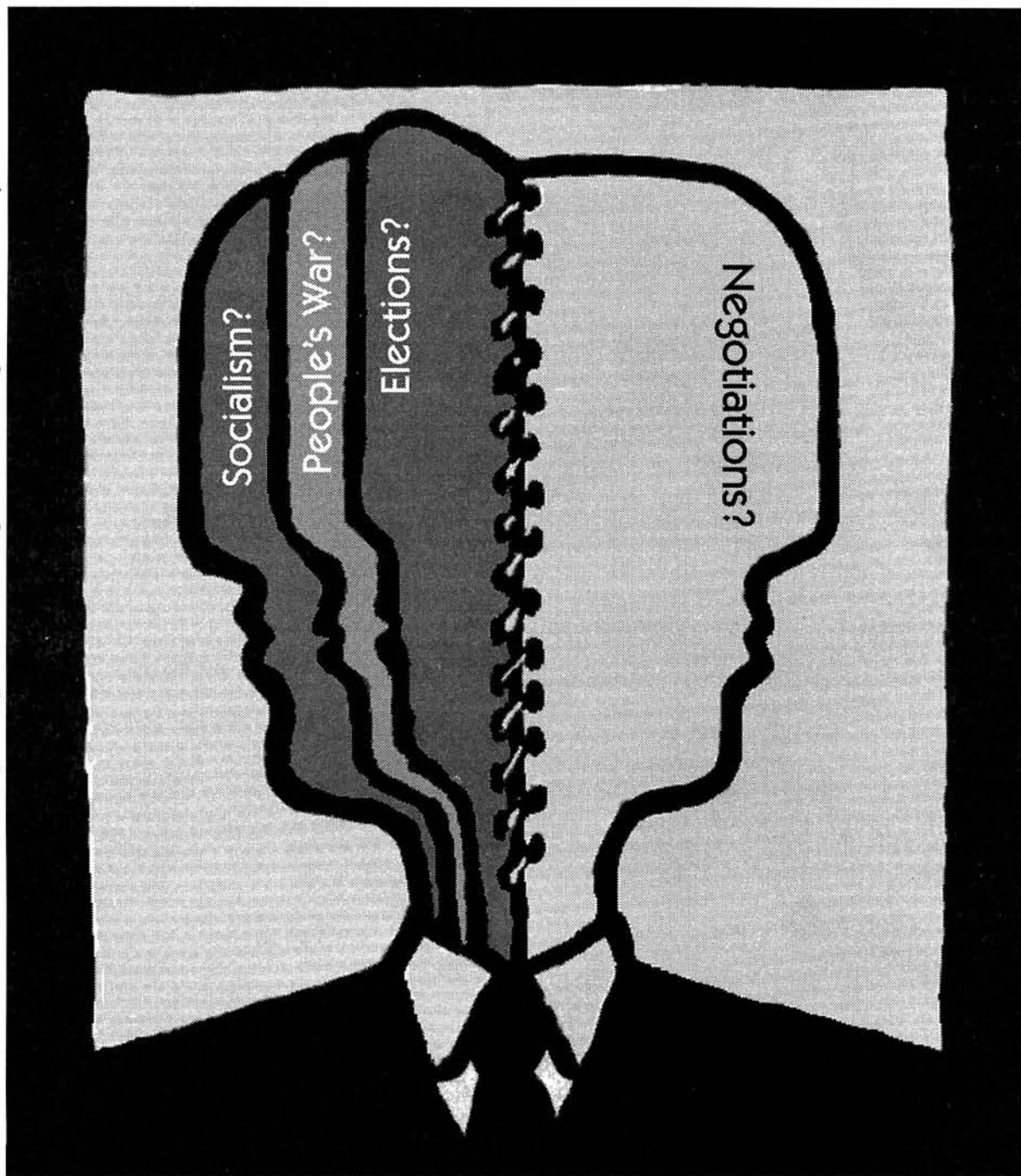
The problem with Cuba is exactly the same. On the one hand, you can say helping Castro means helping one more authoritarian regime. Castro has political prisoners; his system is not an ideal of democracy. On the other hand, if you just stop the assistance, who will be forced to pay the price? Not Castro, but the ordinary people. Blocking aid to Cuba will ruin the system of education and health care in that country. This is really dangerous and has nothing to do with the support of democracy.

Unfortunately, for many of our compatriots, the Third World doesn't exist. If we become stronger, we could probably do much more to help Third World countries.

*What do you see as the prospects for the anti-imperialist struggle given the disintegration of the Eastern Bloc?*

Well, I think there should be a new global pole which is the global left. It's not one semi-imperialist country challenging another imperialist country, one superpower against the other. That is why we are interested in internationalism and contacts all over the world, because that should be the global coordination of the left wing forces. That is the other pole and I think it is much more natural. □

Graphic adapted from a Soviet poster entitled "Speak For Yourself" by Alexander Tarasov.



## Latin America: A Soviet View

### Interview with Sergo Mikoyan

*For the last twenty years, Sergo Mikoyan has been the editor of America Latina, published by the Soviet Academy of Science. The magazine covers cultural, political and military issues in Latin America, is written for specialists and is distributed both within the Soviet Union and internationally. Although he and a few other members of the staff are members of the Communist Party, America Latina is not officially affiliated with the party. Breakthrough interviewed Mikoyan in April, 1990 in Chicago.*



*Breakthrough: How do you analyze the defeat of the Sandinistas in the March election in Nicaragua and what implications do you think their loss will have for the possibility of revolution in the rest of Central America?*

**Sergo Mikoyan:** I believe that the victory of Violetta Chamorro was the result of the continuous struggle by the U.S. to destabilize the Sandinistas. Since 1981, the U.S. had continuously maintained a war against the Nicaraguans and, combined with the Sandinistas' own mistakes, the country had become an economic disaster. In spite of this, the Sandinistas got over 40 percent of the vote and this, I think, is their moral victory. Under any other conditions, they would have won. My own calculations are that, in addition to the 41 percent of the vote which they got, there was another 15 percent who would have liked to vote for the Sandinistas, but knew that if Daniel Ortega had won, there would have been almost no economic help. So I don't think this is an error of catastrophic proportions. I think it is a rather good result.

The Sandinistas will continue to be a militant force in the political life of Nicaragua. They are still the strongest force. All the other parties which supported Chamorro just hated the Sandinistas or at least didn't like them very much. Even the Communists hated the Sandinistas and were ready to join anyone on that basis.

In terms of the implications for Central America, I think it will have both negative and positive results. The negative result is, of course, propagandistic: that the Sandinistas came to power by force; that they didn't want democracy in their country; and that they lost the elections because of this.

On the positive side, they permitted those elections and submitted to the results. They have shown their determination to be part of the democratic process in their country. As a result, left wing organizations throughout the region, such as the FMLN in El Salvador, can also claim to end their internal conflict by political means.

*You referred earlier to economic mistakes that the Sandinistas made. What were those?*

Well, when they came to power, they decided to develop three main sectors of the economy: the state sector, the private sector and a cooperative sector. But, perhaps because of the war, they actually paid much more attention to the state sector than to the other two. The private sector was not given the attention it needed. This was a mistake. Another mistake in the political sphere was, under the pressure of the war, failing to permit more democracy. Of course, under war conditions, it's very difficult to do so, but they still shouldn't have closed *La Prensa*, the main paper of the opposition, or refused to broadcast

the weekly speeches of Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo.

*Why not?*

Because, in spite of the fact that he was their enemy, he still was and is a respected personality in the country and he represented the views of a certain sector of the population who had the right to be heard. The FSLN also failed to account for the role of religion in the country.

*Following the Cuban Revolution, in the 60s and 70s, different guerrilla organizations developed in Latin America hoping to seize state power through armed struggle. Why do you think they failed? Do you think that this is a viable model for revolution at this stage in Latin America?*

There are some cases where without force it is impossible to overthrow dictatorships. Of course, in Nicaragua it was the only way to achieve results. In Haiti too it may be impossible without violence.

In most countries, though, the guerrilla didn't have positive results. In Chile it was impossible to have an armed struggle to overthrow Pinochet — he had a very strong arm; and the attempt to organize a guerrilla movement to wage a protracted war was unsuccessful.

When somebody begins to use force, it's very important to know the limits of this force and against whom it can be used. I absolutely cannot support the struggle of Sendero Luminoso in Peru, which uses terrorist methods. They kill people who are absolutely innocent and they produce anarchy in the countryside. If the Peruvian government falls and Sendero comes to power, with no attention paid to the cost in human lives — and I'm not sure they would be that attentive to human lives — I would be very much afraid.

But generally, I think the 90s will be the democratic phase of the struggle.

*At this time the U.S. is mounting an aggressive attack against Cuba, one aspect of which is the media reporting on a growing political estrangement between the U.S.S.R. and Cuba. What is the truth behind this?*

I think that this talk about the worsening of relations between our country and Cuba are very much exaggerated. Every phrase of Fidel Castro's is described as an action which could ruin cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and Cuba. I think this is absolutely untrue. Of course, we would like him to understand the meaning of *perestroika*. But we are now building a democratic society in our country, so if we permit our own citizens to have different opinions, why would we be so rigid with Cuba?

*Do you think the U.S. will attack Cuba? And what would be the U.S.S.R.'s response?*

I don't believe this will happen, in spite of the recent invasion of Panama. The White House, the Pentagon and other decision-making bodies understand that Congress only wants very fast and successful interventions with a minimal loss of life for Americans. And I am sure that a war against Cuba will not be short and will not be cheap in terms of the cost in American lives. This war will be fought to the last Cuban man and woman who can carry a gun. And this would be such a shame for the U.S. that the political cost would be absolutely unbearable for any U.S. president.

As to our response should this occur, it would be negative. But we have no military alliance with Fidel Castro and Cuba. Castro has repeated many times that they will defend their country themselves. The only help we could give them would be help with arms and supplies.

*One reason why Cuba has been able to maintain its standard of living is because of support received from the socialist bloc. As governments in Eastern Europe change, this support is changing. Do you think there will be a corresponding decrease in support from the Soviet Union?*

Not corresponding. There will be some decrease because our economic situation is now worse than it used to be. But only because of this. We should not betray our friends. And those Eastern European countries have new governments which are ready to repudiate any action of their predecessor. In my opinion there's not enough dignity in such governments. To break alliances and relations, to betray friends cannot be respected by anyone. For instance, I think a very wise act on the part of the White House was to help Ethiopia, when people were dying of starvation. These are acts that are respected in the world community. But not the betrayal of friends and the refusal of solidarity.

By the way, you may know that the Soviet Union declared that it will continue cooperation with Nicaragua, in spite of the victory of Violetta Chamorro.

*With the FSLN or the Chamorro government?*

Economic relations with the government, of course; but not with one party. Their state must be respected.

*Is the Soviet Union pulling back from supporting revolutionary movements or developing nations, either because of its economic crisis or for political reasons?*

Of course, if we had better economic conditions in our country, we could, for instance, have given more help to the Sandinistas during the last year and maybe the results of the elections would have been different. But in terms of support for the liberation movements — the guerrilla forces — this is not an economic, but a political issue. We don't think that conflicts should be resolved by military force. They

must be resolved by national reconciliation and these countries must get aid from international organizations and neighboring countries.

*But given the nature of the U.S. as an imperialist power that views Latin America as its sphere of influence, and the absence of any international force willing to oppose it, how can national liberation movements or newly liberated countries like Nicaragua enter such regional settlements on an equal footing?*

It's true that there are still many people in the U.S. establishment who believe that Latin America is the backyard of the U.S. Most American presidents have believed that only the U.S. has dignity, and, as far as they're concerned, the dignity of other countries is unimportant. They count on these countries' indebtedness, on the decisive power of the dollar. I think these are big mistakes for which America has already paid and will continue to pay a price. These people are 50 years behind history. If they continue to act on these assumptions, beginning with Mexico and on down to Argentina, the results will be the opposite of what they expect. Relations with Latin America will worsen.

*But they got away with the destabilization of Nicaragua and the invasion of Panama. What price will they have to pay?*

Cuba is the result of such mistakes. The existence of an independent and revolutionary Cuba is the price the U.S. paid for its mistakes.

If you compare the position of Latin America in 1940 and in 1990, you will agree with me that these are new types of relations and new countries. Even if you compare the role of the Rio Treaty and the OAS [Ed. note: *The OAS, the Organization of American States, is a forum representing many of the governments of Latin America and the U.S. to discuss hemispheric issues. The Rio Treaty pledges the Latin American and U.S. governments to refrain from intervening in each other's affairs and to come to each other's assistance in case of an external threat. In the past, it has been used to justify U.S. intervention in Latin America*], it is absolutely different now from what it was in 1949. Then the OAS would rubberstamp any decision made by the U.S.

Even in 1983, the invasion of Grenada was supported by some small states in the Caribbean and many other actions organized by the U.S. were supported. Now these are condemned. The U.S. was afraid to put the issue of Panama before the OAS because they knew that it would fail. This is the result of an historical change. Even if there are no significant consequences of this.

But we must still acknowledge that those countries are much weaker than the U.S. and still depend on the U.S. very much in terms of the debt. So it makes them careful, but not dependable. □





# **DEUTSCH MARKS OR KARL MARX?**

**The West  
German Left  
Confronts  
Reunification**

*As events in Eastern Europe began to escalate last winter, and particularly as the reunification of Germany loomed as a dominant feature of the future European landscape, the need to understand these political and social dynamics and their implications for the left became increasingly apparent to us. Over the years, Breakthrough has exchanged political analyses with West German anti-imperialists, who shared a similar history and perspective on struggle within advanced capitalist societies. In March of this year, we wrote to our contacts in West Germany and asked them to share with our readers their views on the current situation. We are pleased to present the following two responses .*



We received your letter asking us to comment on the recent events in Germany. Though your questions are rather difficult to answer (partly because we ourselves have only vague ideas about what's happening now, partly because thorough answers would require several articles), we will try our best.

Events in the GDR and the whole of Eastern Europe are happening faster than we could ever imagine. In East Germany, as in the whole of Eastern Europe, the vocabulary as well as the ideology of "marxism-leninism," "socialism" and "communism" is fundamentally discredited. At the same time the people simply want to have better living conditions. So if western capitalism is attractive for the majority in the GDR and if this majority shows an "anti-communist" attitude, that doesn't necessarily mean that there is a vast conservative majority in the GDR. It only means that people want to live better and that they don't believe anyone who talks in terms of marxism-leninism. And in our view this is a problem for the left, not for the people.

In our opinion, there never was socialism in East Germany. It was another kind of class society and workfare system, but one in which the class antagonisms blocked any economic development and dynamic. There was no economic integration of the suppressed classes and no form of mass consensus. So a mixture of ideological integration and pure repression was the only alternative for the ruling class to cope with the fundamental dissent of the people, and these alternatives failed when the international background changed with *perestroika* and *glasnost*.

Though the vast majority in the GDR voted conservative and 20 percent voted SPD in the March elections, there was still an astonishing 16 percent for the PDS, the former SED. [Ed. note: The SPD is the West German Social Democratic Party; the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) is the reorganized East German Communist Party (SED).] This is quite a success for an organization that is the heir of the former ruling SED. That means that there is an ideological and organizational basis for renewal of the left, and it seems that the PDS is the only relevant left organization that could be an alternative to the conservative and social-democratic parties.

There is no doubt that at the moment it is the high tide of nationalism and fever of reunification. That means that not only left wing and socialist groups are in the minority, but even those democratic and liberal organizations which started civil disobedience in October and November 1989 don't play any role anymore. All those small and independent groups talking about a "third road between capitalism and socialism," a "socialism with a human face" or simply fighting for radical democracy instead of state-socialism — all those groups (United Left, New Forum, Democracy Now, Greens) — were heavily defeated

on March 18.

The consequences of the restructuring of Eastern Europe and the GDR will be enormous even if political reunification doesn't occur. (We think it's misleading to give the "danger of political reunification" too much importance.) First of all there will be a tremendous mass unemployment in the GDR and a massive loss of social security. Prices for housing, food and basic needs will rise drastically while wages are kept low. While West German capitalists are going to pick raisins, those GDR firms that are not productive enough or not competitive will be closed. And West German capitalism will show the working class in the GDR what work discipline, high productivity and efficiency means.

For the FDR all that means the potential of faster economic growth at the one hand and a deeper divide between the "productive" two-thirds of society and the marginalized last third. The acute lack of housing will further increase, and expenses for social security will be cut again. And capitalists will enforce competition between well-paid workers in West Germany and the new low-wage region in the east. So we think that all forms of social conflicts will arise for which the left is only poorly prepared. At the moment the suppressed tend to fight each other as there is a growing and more militant racism in east and west concerning people coming from Poland.

For Europe the process of reunification means first of all a further strengthening of West German hegemony. But furthermore a unified Germany will strengthen the European Community as a whole. As the West German model of capitalism is accepted by nearly all European countries and serves as a sort of orientation (especially the West German way of handling social conflicts) and as Eastern Europe is a kind of backyard for the European Community, the economic and political power of Europe will increase in relation to the U.S. and Japan. One has to see the restructuring of Eastern Europe in the context of the emerging single European market.

The West German left is simply powerless to affect these events. There are several patterns of reaction within the West German radical left. Some simply try to catch the train. They reduce their activities here, travel to the GDR as often as they can, are deeply impressed by the immense dynamics in the GDR and tend to become a little bit narrow-minded. Others tend to reduce those dynamics and their social and political importance simply to the problem of reunification of states. Their only position is anti-nationalism in the sense of a simple defending of two separate states. Others simply refuse to try to understand those dynamics. For them the people in the GDR are simply reactionaries and anti-communists. One big problem is that the questions of reunification and social and political change in the GDR tend to dominate all other issues of

importance, such as the restructuring of Western and Eastern Europe, the recomposition of the working class in East and West Germany and so on.

The state of the West German left at the moment is disastrous. We are split into many small groups and initiatives, without any orientation or perspective. Formerly common and safe ideological grounds are gone (which isn't necessarily bad), any kind of organizational structure disappears (which is most obvious in the crisis of the Greens and the German Communist Party as well as in all those very small circles among the autonomist fraction). Though we have been able to mobilize and organize for some short-lived campaigns we are far from strong enough for any continuous intervention or relevant influence on society.

The Greens are going through a severe organizational crisis. There is a sharp polarization between a more and more reformist majority, which wants to be the junior partner of the SPD in modernizing West German capitalism, and a small fraction of socialists who are about to leave the party. So the majority of the Greens is going to become our enemy and they have already started to fight the radical left.

Within the groups of the radical left now a process of common discussion is about to emerge. One reason is the failure of the last hunger strike campaign to end isolation of political prisoners [Ed. note: In March 1989, political prisoners of the Red Army Faction and the West German resistance movement went on a hunger strike to demand an end to their isolation and their right of political association and communication with each other and with the outside movement.]. Though we were strong, we failed, and this failure was obvious to everyone and there was no chance of declaring it into a victory. Secondly, really no one has an answer or a perspective for left wing policy in the face of the enormously fast reshaping of Europe. So the situation now is that we simply have no other choice than to come together and learn from each other, and it seems that for the first time everybody knows that there is no choice.

We must establish a new form of "debating culture" among ourselves. In a national and international context we have to listen to each other, try to understand each other even if there are different political, cultural and ideological traditions. Secondly, we must carefully analyze the worldwide restructuring of capitalism and the new composition

of the suppressed and exploited classes and try to establish a mass-oriented class policy in the metropolises. Internationalism (not in the sense of solidarity work inspired by morality, but in the sense of a consciousness about a common class situation) and anti-patriarchism are necessary and fundamental parts of this new revolutionary project.

In closing we should say something about our organization. The Jobber-und-Erwerbsloseninitiative Hamburg has existed since 1982. Though we stem from the so-called autonomist wing of the West German left, we differ from similar groups in what we call class policy and mass orientation. That means that we not only try to organize the small autonomist scene but also all those people who are unemployed, live on social welfare, have only bad jobs; in short, all who belong to the one-third living at the edge of



East meets West ... West eats East.

modern yuppie-capitalism. Though some of us have a marxist-leninist background, most of us call ourselves "social-revolutionaries" and we try (not too successfully, though we've had our high points) to establish an anti-imperialist and internationalist movement that is deeply rooted in the "underclass" and fights all forms of workfare systems and workfare states.

We hope that we could help you with our answers. We know that most of them are nothing more than keywords. We would like to get any kind of reaction from you and to keep in contact.

Jobber-und-Erwerbsloseninitiative Hamburg  
April 17, 1990



Writing this on the night of the FRG's victory in the world soccer tournament — while tens of thousands of people are on the streets, waving both the black-red-gold flag of "Germany" and old Nazi flags, shouting "Germany" over and over again, with neo-fascist groups gathering at squatted houses in East Berlin, trying to attack them, with a nationalist crowd gathering at (East) Berlin's Alexanderplatz and (West) Berlin's Kurfürstendamm harassing and beating up immigrants, looting shops and battling with police forces — it is kind of difficult to give a bright view of the near future in a soon-to-be-reunited Germany.

The militant left in the FRG, and the left in general in both the FRG and the GDR has been on the defensive ever since the events of November 9, 1989. [Ed. note: the opening of the Berlin Wall] There are some issues that clearly stand out where the left will react and act in the near future.

The main problem at this point is the rising

marginalized people — by getting the left's viewpoints into the media again and by making the left's objectives more clear and accessible to people outside the movement. The struggle against racism and neo-fascism will be a decisive issue for the left — both in the ability to retain a strong presence on the streets and also in unmasking the institutionalized racism against Third World people and immigrants in the consolidated EEC of 1992.

The struggle against neo-fascism is closely tied to an anti-capitalist analysis, and it will be the left's task to point out in whose interest the new repressive legislation against immigrants and foreigners is and who is really benefitting from a unified Germany. The anti-capitalist struggle takes on a more direct form in the struggle against gentrification and "restructuring" of the inner city neighborhoods that is currently taking place in all major cities in the FRG, and will take place in the GDR as well once West German developers and real estate companies have

bought up most of the former state-owned houses. Since the issue of gentrification directly concerns people's lives and the quality of their living situation, so far anti-gentrification alliances in several cities against bigger development projects have been successful in building coalitions with neighborhood associations, militant leftists and reformists.

Recently, the number of squatted houses in several cities has increased again. While most of those houses have been evicted shortly after their occupation by strong police forces — in accordance with the EEC line that no squat should be allowed for longer than 48 hours — in the GDR squatting and silent squats have taken on the character of a popular movement — not only among the autonomist movement, but also with low-income people and students. At this point there are over 60 open squats

in East Berlin and numerous squats in other major cities of the GDR.

Analysts and the media are already projecting a "hot autumn" in the GDR with struggles over a decreasing standard of living, cuts in the social services and an increasing unemployment rate. At this point, it is unclear whether working class people will take their dissatisfaction into the streets or whether it will just benefit the neo-fascist move-



East Germans with shopping bags on their heads protest their compatriots' shopping sprees, Nov. 1989.

number of neo-fascist groups and organizations — both on the streets and in parliament — which are drawing strength from an overall chauvinist and nationalist sentiment, especially among young people in both Germanies. This problem has to be dealt with on a number of different levels — on the streets, with anti-fascist demonstrations and street fairs against fascism, racism and sexism, as well as in a struggle for the "hearts and minds" of the working class and



ment, in the absence of a strong organized union movement and more mainstream socially progressive organizations. But for the FRG's militant left, these struggles definitely pose the questions of ways of supporting them actively and taking them into the streets and into the communities in the FRG as well.

Another main issue for the militant left has been and continues to be the EEC consolidation of 1992 — to expose its anti-immigrant laws, the consolidated means of repression against social movements and the consolidation of major industrial and capitalist forces. The issue of the EEC consolidation of 1992 also ties in the opposition to the official celebration of 500 years of the *conquista*. At this point, internationalism and internationalist solidarity are being discussed again, with people trying to figure out how to convey to a broader spectrum of forces in the societies around Western Europe that the EEC consolidation means an increased exploitation of so-called Third World countries and a more solidified oppression of national liberation struggles in those countries. One example of the direction this discussion has taken in several West European countries is the "anti-Shell campaign" that is focusing on Shell as a multi-national corporation involved in a number of fields — South Africa, genetic engineering, the food market, deforestation in Asia and South America, the oil market, etc. The objective of the anti-Shell campaign is to attack the multi-national in Western Europe directly — through material damage, through publicity work from a wide spectrum of movements and organizations (the anti-apartheid movement, unions, the reformist left, solidarity groups, women's groups and the militant left) and by using Shell as an example for the multi-nationals' rise in a consolidated Europe. The anti-Shell campaign is also an attempt to get away from solidarity work that just focuses on liberation struggles abroad and completely aligns itself with one national liberation movement, without organizing an effective resistance at home, in the capitalist metropolises. Activities in the anti-Shell campaign have included simultaneous publicity and sabotage actions at Shell gas stations and headquarters in several West European countries.

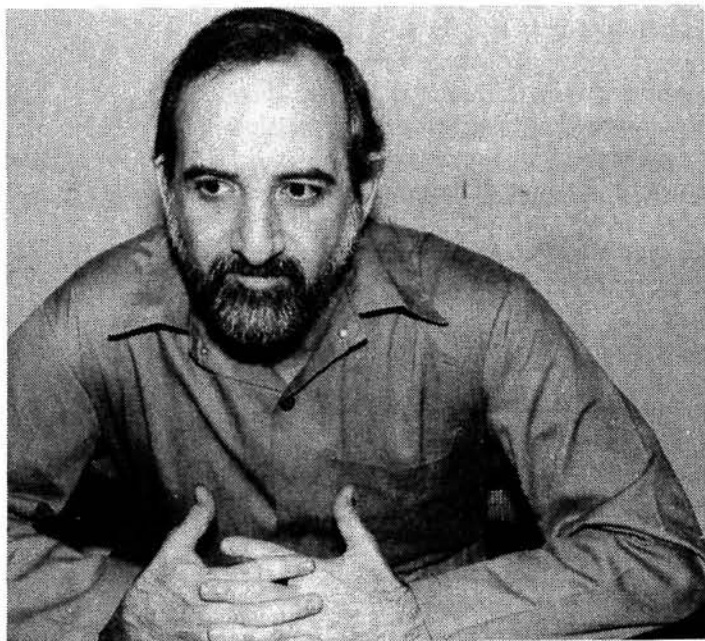
A continuous problem facing the FRG's militant left movements is the rising state repression and the struggle to assert its demands more offensively in the public. The infamous "anti-terrorist" paragraph 129a is increasingly being used to criminalize not only the armed struggle and the anti-imperialist resistance, but whole social movements, such as the militant women's movement and the anti-fascist movement. [Ed. note: Paragraph 129a of the West German legal code makes it a crime to belong to or support a "terrorist" organization, even if the individual is not accused of any concrete acts. In recent years, women fighting against gene and reproductive technology, for example, were charged and convicted under Paragraph 129a.] This

struggle also involves the struggle for the association of the political prisoners from the RAF (Red Army Fraction) and the resistance in large, self-determined collective groups. Again, this is not an isolated West German issue, since the consolidation of repression takes place all over Europe and takes on its most visible form in the isolation of the political prisoners in the numerous high security prisons throughout Western Europe. A current example of this struggle is the hunger strike of the political prisoners from GRAPO and PCE(r) in Spain for their re-association in large collectives. The hunger strike is entering its seventh month, with the PSOE government of Spain showing no intention of ending its hard line stand or of ending the torture of the prisoners in the form of force-feeding and the coma solution, which at the time of this writing was responsible for the death of one GRAPO prisoner in May and the severe physical damage inflicted on all 40 participating prisoners. The struggle against isolation is also a fight for conditions that would allow a meaningful discussion and communications between the prisoners and the movements on the outside.

In terms of the FRG's women's movement, a number of issues can be mentioned that will determine the future struggles. First, the fight to keep abortion legal and accessible for all women, against a growing anti-choice movement in both Germanies. So far, abortion legislation in the GDR has been much less repressive than in the FRG, and women in the GDR already have started to mobilize against attempts to restrict their options by imposing the FRG's abortion legislation on the GDR. The women's movement has been highly visible in the struggle against racism as well, and separate women's anti-fascist groups are forming throughout the FRG. Another main issue remains the struggle against genetic engineering and the new reproductive technologies and for women's self-determination over their lives and bodies — both in the metropolises and the so-called Third World countries. In general, the shifting sentiments in society are making open sexism fashionable again — both in terms of cutting down the number of women in the labor market and in terms of sexual harassment in the streets and violence against women, especially in the GDR.

This is definitely an incomplete analysis or outlook, and it remains to be seen whether the leftist forces in the GDR and the FRG will be able to break through the current defensiveness and immobilization. But a saying here goes, "We can turn each defeat into our next victory — and only the struggles that we don't take on determine our defeats." In that sense — for the struggle against sexism, racism and fascism and for self-determination and liberation continues internationally. Venceremos.

— A West German Autonomist



## ***Dr. Alan Berkman*** **FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE**

**D**r. Alan Berkman has been battling cancer under notoriously bad U.S. prison conditions since 1985. In the last several months, his health has seriously deteriorated, and his life is now in danger. Alan has been eligible for parole since May 1987, but the federal government has continued to detain Alan despite the life-threatening nature of his current condition. A humanitarian campaign launched recently has brought hundreds of letters from all over the country to the attention of the U.S. Parole Commission. Still, the government doesn't budge. The gravity of Alan's condition inspired his co-defendants to seek a resolution with the government that would guarantee Alan's immediate release. In early July, a plea agreement was reached (see next page). But still, Alan remains in jail.

Arrested in 1985 for possession of weapons, Alan Berkman has spent the last two years awaiting trial with five other activists on charges that they conspired to "use illegal means to oppose U.S. foreign and domestic policies." Specifically they were charged with the 1983 bombings of four government sites, including the Capitol Building in protest against the Grenada invasion and other U.S. foreign aggression. He and the others are being held at the Washington D.C. Jail.

I was handcuffed to the hospital bed. There were literally dozens of armed marshalls in the room with me, as well as the police force outside the hospital...You see, I had been labeled a 'terrorist,' so I wasn't human in their eyes. I was the enemy; the other.

Could this be a scene from inside a U.S. prison? The United States government, grand espouser of democracy and human rights? In 1985, when Berkman was convicted, he became one of over 100 progressive activists now held in U.S. prisons. He also came to experience firsthand the medical treatment that the government reserves for its political prisoners.

For years before his arrest, Dr. Alan Berkman was a political activist and community doctor. He treated Native Americans at the siege at Wounded Knee and many political prisoners including Puerto Rican independentista Lolita Lebron, New Afrikan nationalist Sekou Odinga and the prisoners following the Attica rebellion.

While awaiting trial in Philadelphia, Berkman developed Hodgkin's disease, a form of lymphatic cancer. The Federal Bureau of Prisons prepared to send him to its hospital in Springfield, Missouri, despite expert testimony that the hospital was incapable of treating Hodgkin's disease. A humanitarian campaign resulted in a federal judge ruling that Berkman be treated in a suitable hospital. Berkman's chances of recovery were good, although medical experts warned that intense stress would make a relapse of his cancer more likely.

Yet, because of his high security designation, Berkman underwent two major operations and ten weeks of radiotherapy in the abusive conditions he describes above. When his cancer went into remission, the Bureau of Prisons sent Berkman to its Marion, Illinois penitentiary, a total lockdown prison condemned by Amnesty International. Its one — unlicensed — physician had never treated Hodgkin's disease.

In May 1988, Berkman was transferred to the Washington, D.C. Jail to await trial for the Resistance Conspiracy case. As a defendant in this case, Berkman was held for months in

isolation, and not allowed to go outdoors for a full year. It surprised no one when Berkman's cancer recurred early this spring.

Again, the Bureau of Prisons tried to send Berkman to its Springfield hospital. Again, he was forced to undergo a surgical biopsy while shackled to the operating table. Another public outcry and campaign has enabled Berkman to receive barely adequate care in Washington, D.C. Increasingly vulnerable to infection and hemorrhage, Berkman has just begun a 6-month program of chemotherapy, from which he will recover in a tiny, unsanitary cell, separated from loved ones — labelled a "terrorist," surrounded by SWAT teams and armed guards. Under the best conditions, his chances of survival have dropped to 50%.

Yet the "security precautions" and medical neglect that Berkman has endured for the last five years reduce his survival chances even further. These conditions are gratuitously cruel in light of the fact that Alan Berkman has been eligible for parole for over three years. If Berkman had renounced his revolutionary, anti-racist politics, attorneys say, he would have been released from prison long ago. Already, Berkman has served far more time than is called for by the sentencing guidelines.

Please join the humanitarian campaign for Alan Berkman's parole. Bishop Edward Browning, head of the Episcopal Church of the U.S., along with Congressional representatives Ted

Weiss, John Conyers and Ronald Dellums are among hundreds of concerned individuals who have written to the Parole Commission on Berkman's behalf. Amnesty International and the Physicians for Human Rights are now monitoring his case. Letters of support can be sent to:

U.S. Parole Commission  
Air World Center, Suite 220  
10920 Ambassador Drive  
Kansas City, MO 64153  
Attn: Irma Huseman, Case Analyst

A message asking for Alan Berkman's parole can be faxed directly to the Parole Commission by calling 1-800-782-5465. Ask to send the "Alan Berkman message." For more information about Dr. Berkman, the Resistance Conspiracy case, and U.S. political prisoners and Prisoners of War, contact:

The Emergency Committee for  
Political Prisoners' Rights  
P.O. Box 28191  
Washington, D.C. 20038

Letters to Alan, who has been pulled away from his closest comrades during his treatment, are also encouraged. Write to Alan at the address listed on the inside back cover.

### *Statement from the Resistance Conspiracy Defendants*

While this issue of *Breakthrough* was going to press, the defendants in the Resistance Conspiracy case reached a plea agreement with the U.S. government. Under its terms, all charges will be dismissed against Alan, Tim and Susan (who were not charged with conspiracy), while Marilyn, Linda and Laura will plead guilty to conspiracy and the Capitol bombing.

Our initial motivation for entering into negotiations was Alan's recurrence of cancer — we felt it was the only way to ensure that he would not be subjected to the stress of a trial and the possibility of a longer sentence. With the Resistance Conspiracy case charges dismissed, Alan has a much better chance of winning parole and getting out of prison to recuperate from chemotherapy.

Legally, our assessment was that the "common purpose" nature of the indictment — the fact that the government did not have to prove that any individual participated in any of the charged actions — made convictions on the charges very likely. Each of us would then be subject to 40 or 45 additional years in prison. In political cases, maximum sentences — sentences vastly disproportionate to the actual charges — are the rule. That's why Linda already has a 35 year sentence, Susan and Tim, 58 years, and Marilyn, 70 years. Under the terms of the plea agreement, three of us get no additional time and three face a maximum exposure of 15 years.

We had intense discussion about the political acceptability of taking a plea. We believe that the years of struggle around political prisoners and Prisoners of War, and a series of political conspiracy trials over the past 5 years in particular, created conditions where we were able to expose the political nature of the prosecution relatively quickly. Our collective decision to

always focus on the issue of the righteousness of resistance to U.S. war crimes and not on issues of individual innocence or guilt meant that we were able to defeat the government's efforts to criminalize us and the anti-imperialist movement.

We believe this political success gives us the basis to be legally flexible. We also believe that doing anything we can to save Alan's life is an expression of our revolutionary politics — a commitment to comradeship, to love and to life. That others of us had the charges dismissed and that sentence exposure is limited for the other three is also important.

The Resistance Conspiracy case will be officially ended sometime in September or October, but all six of us will remain political prisoners. With the exception of Alan, who will "max out" in two years, all of us have or will have lengthy sentences. Alan will be undergoing chemotherapy for months and is still designated to return to U.S.P. Marion; Tim is definitely being sent back there. We assume all or most of us women will be sent to the maximum security prison for women at Marianna, Florida.

We join the other political prisoners and POW's held by the U.S. government. The conditions in which we'll be held, the physical abuses to which we'll be subjected, our chance for release will depend on the work and commitment of those of you on the outside. We look forward to working with all of you on a campaign that will free all political prisoners and Prisoners of War.

*Venceremos,*

Alan Berkman  
Linda Evans

Marilyn Buck  
Tim Blunk

Susan Rosenberg  
Laura Whitehorn



# WRITE THROUGH THE WALLS

*The U.S. government says there are no political prisoners or POWs in this country. Yet the partial list below shows this claim is a complete lie. We urge you to write them and to send literature. These women and men represent the best of the movement. Make their struggle yours. "The Real Dragon" sponsors a continuing book drive to political prisoners and POWs. For more information or to send contributions write: POB 3294, Berkeley, CA 94703-9901.*

## Puerto Rican Prisoners of War

Edwin Cortéz #92153-024  
Ricardo Jimenez #88967-024 A-2  
Alberto Rodríguez #92150-024 B-3  
FCI Lewisburg  
PO Box 1000  
Lewisburg, PA 17837

Carlos Alberto Torres #88976-024  
FCI Talladega  
902 Renfro (Gamma-A)  
Talladega, AL 35160

Luis Rosa #NO2743  
Box 112  
Joliet, IL 60434

Elizab Escobar #88969-024  
FCI Colorado Unit  
PO Box 1500  
El Reno, OK 73036

Alicia Rodríguez #NO7157  
Box 5007  
Dwight, IL 60420

Oscar López-Rivera #87651-024  
PO Box 1000  
Marion, IL 62959

Adolfo Matos #88968-024  
Lompoc Fedl. Penitentiary  
3901 Klein Blvd  
Lompoc, CA 93438

Haydeé Beltrán #88462-024  
Dylcia Pagán #88971-024  
Lucy Rodríguez #88973-024  
Alejandrina Torres #92152-024  
Carmen Valentín #88974-024  
FCI Pleasanton  
5701 8th Street  
Camp Parks  
Dublin, CA 94566

## Puerto Rican Political Prisoners

Luz Marfa Berríos Berríos  
#24582-004  
FCI Lexington  
3301 Leestown Road  
Lexington, KY 40511

Dora García #94735-024  
FCI Pleasanton  
5701 8th Street  
Camp Parks  
Dublin, CA 94566

Jaime Delgado #94736-024-B1  
USP Terre Haute  
PO Box 33  
Terre Haute, IN 47808

Antonio Camacho Negrón  
PO Box 8000  
Bradford, PA 16701

## New Afrikan/Black Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners

Richard Mafundi Lake #79972  
Sekou Kambui #113058  
s/n William Turk  
100 Warrior Lane  
Bessemer, AL 35023

Robert Seth Hayes #74-A-2280  
Southport Correctional Facility  
Box 2000  
Pine City, NY 14871

Jalil A. Muntaqin #77-A-4283  
s/n Anthony Bottom  
Greenhaven State Prison  
Drawer B  
Stormville, NY 12582-0010

Sundiata Acoli #39794-066  
USP Leavenworth  
PO Box 1000  
Leavenworth, KS 66048

Geronimo ji-Jaga Pratt #B40319  
Box 1902 4B4C-210  
Tehachapi, CA 93581

Adbul Majid #83-A-483  
s/n Anthony LaBorde  
Great Meadow Corr. Facility  
PO Box 51  
Comstock, NY 12821

Teddy (Jah) Heath #75-A-0139  
Box A-G  
Fallsburg, NY 12733

Dhoruba al-Mujahid Bin-Wahad  
#72-A-0639  
Wende Correctional Facility  
1187 Wende Road  
Alden, NY 14004

Albert Nuh Washington #77-A-1528  
Wende Correctional Facility  
1187 Wende Road  
Alden, NY 14004

Kazi Toure  
s/n Chris King  
FCI Lewisburg  
PO Box 1000  
Lewisburg, PA 17837

Johnny Imani Harris #2-373s  
Atmore-Holman  
Box 37 Holman Station  
Atmore, AL 36503

Rickke Green #84244  
Oklahoma State Penitentiary  
PO Box 97  
McAlester, OK 74502

Mondo Langa  
s/n David Rice  
PO Box 2500  
Lincoln, NE 68502-0500

Herman Bell #79-C-262  
Basheer Hameed #82-A-6313  
s/n James York  
Mohaman Koti #80-A-808  
Shawangunk Corr. Facility  
PO Box 700  
Wallkill, NY 12589

Gary Tyler #84156  
Louisiana State Penitentiary  
Angola, LA 70712

Mark Cook #20025-2148H  
Mutulu Shakur #83205-012  
Lompoc Fedl Penitentiary  
3901 Klein Blvd  
Lompoc, CA 93438

Haki Malik Abdullah #C-56123  
s/n Michael Green  
Ruchell Cinque Magee  
#A92051 4B3L-15  
Hugo Pinell #A88401  
PO Box 3456  
Corcoran Prison  
Corcoran, CA 93212-8310

Maliki Shakur Latine #81-A-4469  
PO Box 367B  
Dannemora, NY 12929

Thomas Warner #M 3049  
Huntington Prison  
Drawer R  
Huntington, PA 16652

Martin Rutrell #042600  
FCI Raiford  
UCI 68-2018 Box 221  
Raiford, FL 32083

Herman Ferguson #89-A-4621  
Attica CF  
PO Box 149  
Attica, NY 14011-0149

Sababu Na Uhuru #07350-016  
s/n William Stoner  
PO Box 326  
Mercersburg, PA 17236-0326

Kalima Aswad #B24120  
s/n Robert Duren  
CMC  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93409

Sekou Odinga #05228-054  
s/n Nathaniel Burns  
Kojo Bomani Sababu #39384-66  
USP Marion  
PO Box 1000  
Marion, IL 62959

Richard Thompson-El #155229  
Box 10  
Stillwater, MN 55082

Awali Stoncham #B-98168  
Soledad Prison  
Soledad, CA 93960

Larry Guy  
Jackson State Prison  
Box E  
Jackson, MI 49204

Cecilio Chui Ferguson #04372-054  
Drawer K  
Dallas, PA 18612-0286

Abdul Haqq #141-88-1173  
s/n Craig Randall  
HDM Rikers Island  
1414 Hazen St.  
E. Elmhurst, NY 11470

Robert Taylor #10376-054  
 FCI Otisville  
 PO Box 1000  
 Otisville, NY 10903

### *Move Prisoners*

Mumia Abu Jamal #M8335  
 Michael Hill Africa #M4973  
 Drawer R  
 Huntingdon, PA 16652

Alberta Wickers Africa  
 PO Box 180  
 Muncy, PA 17756

Ramona Johnson Africa #7564  
 Debbi Sims Africa #6307  
 Consusuela Dotson Africa #6434  
 Janine Phillips Africa #6309  
 Merle Austin Africa #6306  
 Janet Holloway Africa #6308  
 PO Box 180  
 Muncy, PA 17756

Delbert Orr Africa #42259-066  
 Charles Sims Africa #41793-066  
 USP Lumpoc  
 3901 Klein Blvd.  
 Lumpoc, CA 93436

Carlos Perez Africa #M7400  
 Drawer K  
 Dallas, PA 18612-0286

William Phillips Africa #41685-066  
 Edward Goodman Africa  
 #42079-066  
 PO Box 1000  
 Leavenworth, KS 66048

### *Virgin Islands 5*

Hanif Shabazz Bey #9654-131  
 s/n B. Gereau  
 PO Box 1000  
 Marion, IL 62959

Malik El-Amin #96557-131  
 s/n Meral Smith  
 FCI Lewisburg  
 PO Box 1000  
 Lewisburg, PA 17837

Raphael Kwesi Joseph #96558-131  
 Lumpoc Fedl Penitentiary  
 3901 Klein Blvd  
 Lumpoc, CA 93438

Abdul Aziz #96521-131  
 USP Leavenworth  
 PO Box 1000  
 Leavenworth, KS 66048

### *Native American Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners*

Leonard Peltier #89637-132  
 USP Leavenworth  
 PO Box 1000  
 Leavenworth, KS 66048

Standing Deer #83947  
 s/n Robert Hugh Wilson  
 E. Block Box 97  
 McAlester, OK 74502

Rita Silk Nauni #Box 11492  
 Mable Bassett  
 Oklahoma City, OK 73136

Norma Jean Croy #14293  
 CIW  
 Frontera, CA 91720

Eddie Hatcher #DL213  
 No. Carolina Central Prison  
 1300 Western Blvd.  
 Raleigh, NC 27606

### *North American Political Prisoners*

Kathy Boudin #84-G-171  
 Judy Clark #83-G-313  
 Box 1000  
 Bedford Hills, NY 10507-2496

David Gilbert #83-A-6158  
 Attica Correctional Facility  
 PO Box 149  
 Attica, NY 14011-0149

Silvia Baraldini #05125-054  
 PMB - 7007  
 Shawnee Unit  
 Marianna, FL 32446

Richard Picariello #05812  
 PO Box 100  
 South Walpole, MA 02071

Larry Giddings #10917-086  
 USP Leavenworth  
 PO Box 1000  
 Leavenworth, KS 66048

Ed Mead #251397  
 PO Box 777  
 Monroe, WA 98272

Bill Dunne #10916-086  
 PO Box 1000  
 Marion, IL 62959

### *Resistance Conspiracy Defendants*

Alan Berkman #233-315  
 Timothy Blunk #233-410  
 Marilyn Buck #233-396  
 Linda Evans #233-411  
 Susan Rosenberg #223-412  
 Laura Whitehorn #220-858  
 1901 D St SE  
 Washington, DC 20003

### *Ohio 7*

Thomas Manning #202873-SH  
 Richard Williams #10377-016  
 Box CN-861  
 Trenton, NJ 08625

Barbara Curzi-Laaman #18213-053  
 FCI Pleasanton  
 5701 8th Street  
 Camp Parks  
 Dublin, CA 94566

Jaan Laaman #10372-016  
 USP Leavenworth  
 PO Box 1000  
 Leavenworth, KS 66048

Raymond Luc Levasseur #10376-016  
 PO Box 1000  
 Marion, IL 62959

Carol Manning #10375-016  
 FCI Lexington  
 3301 Leestown Road  
 Lexington, KY 40511

### *Ploughshares/Disarmament Prisoners*

Jennifer Haines  
 FCI Lexington  
 3301 Leestown Road  
 Lexington, KY 40511

Fr. Carl Kabat #03230-045  
 FCI Sandstone  
 PO Box 1000  
 Sandstone, MN 55072

Larry Morlan #03788-045  
 Marion Fedl Prison Camp  
 PO Box 1000  
 Marion, IL 62959

Jean Gump #03789-045  
 Dorothy Eber #04996-045  
 FCI Alderson  
 Cottage 17, Box A  
 Alderson, WV 24910

Richard Miller #15249-077  
 1539 11th St.  
 Des Moines, IA 50314-2404

Helen Woodson #03231-045  
 c/o C. Dixon  
 3559 Highway G  
 Wiscasin Dell, WI 53965

Jerry Ebner #04467-045-B  
 FCI Sandstone  
 PO Box 1000  
 Sandstone, MN 55072

Katya Komisaruk  
 PO Box 19262  
 Spokane, WA 99219

George Ostensen  
 Oak Hill Correctional Inst  
 PO Box 238  
 Oregon, WI 53575

Greg Boertje  
 Chester County Prison  
 301 S Wawaset Rd  
 West Chester, PA 19382

Jim Albertini  
 c/o Ann Albertini  
 PO Box AB  
 Kurtistown, HI 96760

Fr. Jerry Zawada #04995-045  
 Pembroke Station  
 Danbury, CT 05206

### *Vancouver 4*

Brent Taylor  
 Frontenac Instit.  
 PO Bag 7500  
 Kingston, ONT, Canada K7K5E6

Ann Hansen  
 Prison for Women  
 Box 515  
 Kingston, ONT, Canada  
 K7L4W7

### *Irish Political Prisoner*

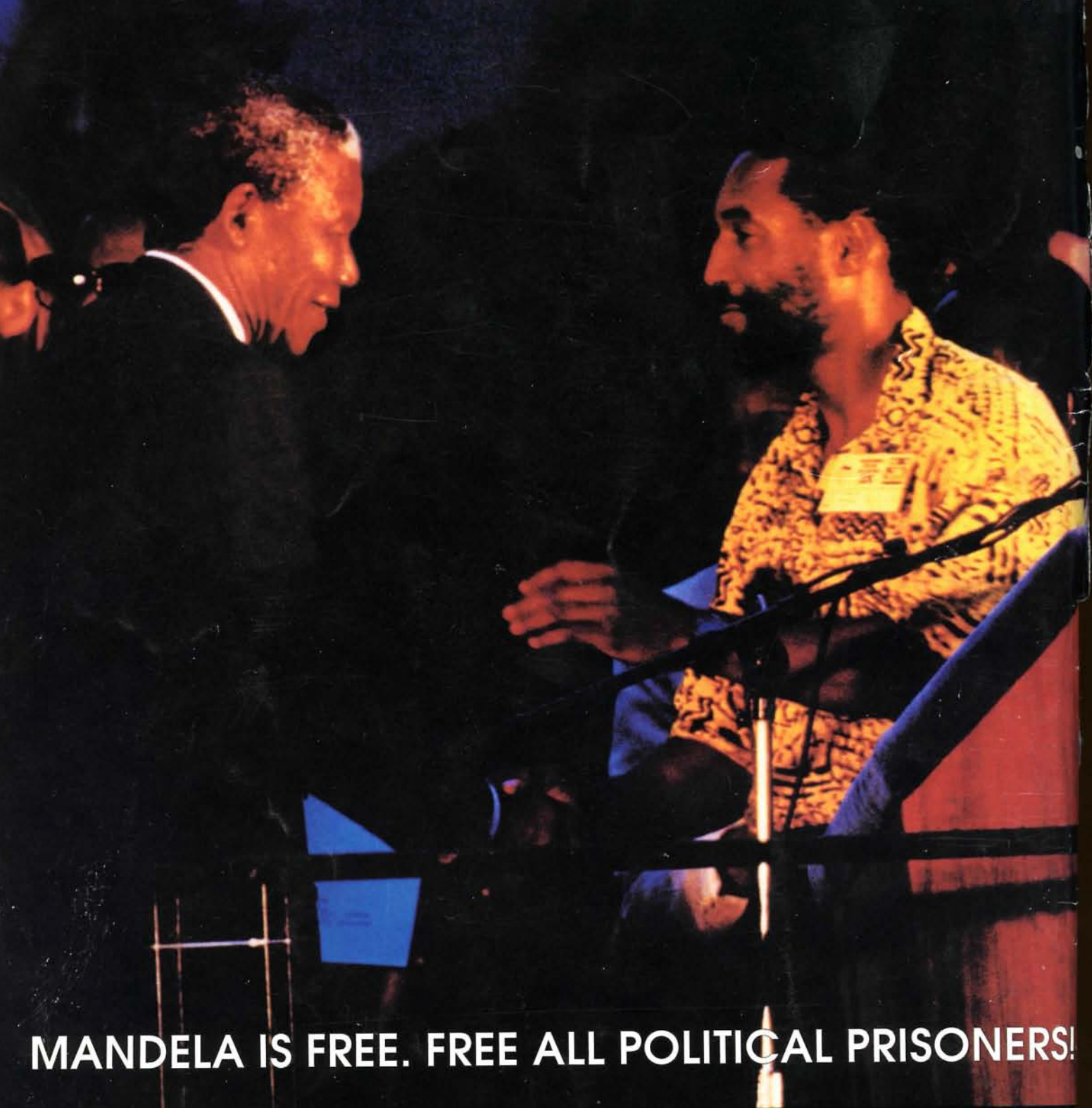
Joseph Doherty #07792-0545  
 MCC New York  
 150 Park Row  
 New York, NY 10007

### *Japanese Political Prisoner*

Uyu Kikumura #09008-050  
 USP Marion  
 PO Box 1000  
 Marion, IL 62959

We can use all the help we can get keeping this list of prisoner addresses up to date. If you are moved, or if you know of any corrections that need to be made, please contact us at *Breakthrough*, PO Box 14422, San Francisco, CA 94114.





**MANDELA IS FREE. FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!**

**"It's been said that there are no strangers in the struggle for freedom, only comrades that never met. Black political prisoners of the United States share a human experience with you that few who have not undergone long periods of imprisonment, isolation and torture for their political principles can understand. Amandla!"**

— from a statement by Dhoruba Bin-Wahad on behalf of U.S. political prisoners. Dhoruba greeted Nelson Mandela at his appearance in Harlem. Dhoruba, a former member of the New York Black Panther Party, spent nearly 19 years in prison fighting frame-up charges of assault on a police officer. He was recently released when the charges were overturned.